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The First FORTY-FIVE YEARS

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The L I F E

O F

JAMES LACKINGTON.

[Price Five Shillings in boards.]

M. K. O. R. S.

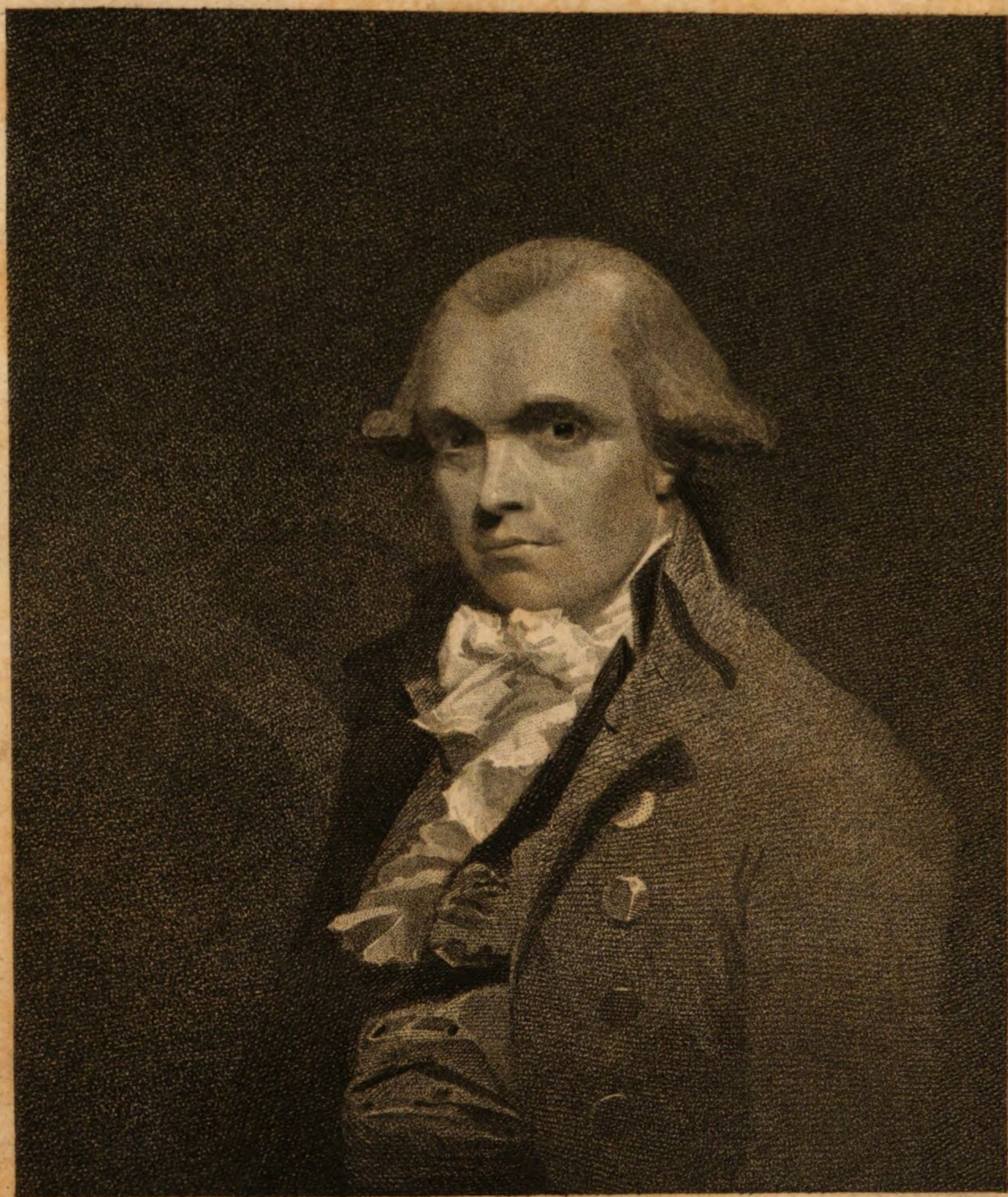
THE NEW YORK

THE L. E.

JAMES JACKSON

THE NEW YORK

Sutor Ultra Crepidam Feliciter ausus.



Keenan Pinx.^t

Scott sculp.^t

I. LACKINGTON.

*Who a few years since, began Business with five Pounds;
now sells one Hundred Thousand Volumes Annually.*

M E M M O I R S

O F

The First FORTY-FIVE YEARS

O F

The L I F E

O F

JAMES LACKINGTON,

The present Bookseller in Chiswell-street, Moorfields, London.

Written by Himself.

In a Series of LETTERS to a Friend.

With a TRIPLE DEDICATION.

1. To The PUBLIC.
2. To RESPECTABLE } BOOKSELLERS.
3. To SORDID }

" Honour and shame from no condition rise ;
" Act well your part, there all the honour lies.
" Fortune in men has some small difference made,
" One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade ;
" The cobbler apron'd and the parson gown'd,
" The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
" What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl ?
" I'll tell you, friend—a wise man and a fool.
" You'll find if once the monarch acts the monk,
" Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk ;
" Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow :
" The rest is all but leather or prunella."

Pope.

" Let high birth triumph ! what can be more great ?
" Nothing—but merit in a low estate.

— such the vanity of great and small,
" Contempt goes round, and all men laugh at all."

Young.

L O N D O N :

Printed for and sold by the AUTHOR, No. 46 and 47, Chiswell-Street; W. Bulgin, Bristol; and all other Booksellers.

Lackington
Memoirs
1830 ?

148 BS div



A TRIPLE DEDICATION.

I. TO THE PUBLIC.

WORTHY PATRONS,

WERE I to address you in the accustomed declamatory strain which has long been adopted as the *universal language* of dedications, viz. FLATTERY, I should not only merit your contempt, for thus endeavouring to impose upon your understandings, but also render myself ridiculously conspicuous, by a feeble attempt to perform that, for which, as well by nature as long established habit, I am totally disqualified.

On the other hand, I should esteem myself equally meriting your censure, as being guilty of a flagrant species of ingratitude, were I to omit availing myself of so favourable an op-

portunity as now presents itself of expressing the respect and veneration I entertain for you, resulting from the very extensive and ample encouragement with which you have crowned my indefatigable exertions to obtain your patronage, by largely contributing to the diffusion of science and rational entertainment, on such moderate terms as were heretofore unknown.

Permit me to indulge the pleasing hope, that when I assert my mind is deeply impressed with the most grateful sense of the obligation, I shall be honoured with credit. If this opinion be well founded, to enlarge on the subject were superfluous—if otherwise, the strongest arguments, the most splendid and forcible language could convey, would not ensure conviction; I therefore desist, fully persuaded that the most satisfactory demonstration I can possibly exhibit of the sincerity of this declaration, will be, an inviolable adherence to that uniform line of
conduct

conduct which has already secured your approbation to a degree eminent as unprecedented, and which indeed is daily rendered more evident, by a progressive increase in the number and extent of your commands, trusting, that so long as you find my practice invariably correspondent to those professions so frequently exhibited to your notice (from which to deviate would render me unworthy your protection) you will in defiance of all malignant opposition, firmly persevere in the liberal support of him whose primary ambition it is, and during life shall be, to distinguish himself as,

WORTHY PATRONS,

Your much obliged,

Ever grateful,

And devoted humble servant,

Chiswell-Street, October, 1791.

JAMES LACKINGTON.

2. To that part of the numerous body of
BOOKSELLERS of Great Britain and
Ireland, whose conduct JUSTLY claims
the additional title of RESPECTABLE ;

Whose candour and liberality he has in numerous instances experienced, and feels a sensible pleasure in thus publicly acknowledging.

And lastly (though not least in *Fame*)

3. To those fordid and malevolent BOOKSELLERS, whether they resplendent dwell in stately mansions, or in wretched huts of dark and grovelling obscurity ;

To whose assiduous and unwearied labours to injure his reputation with their brethren and the public, he is in a considerable degree indebted for the confidence reposed in him, and the success he has been honoured with, productive of his present prosperity,

THESE MEMOIRS

are, with all due discrimination of the respective merits of each,

Inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

CUSTOM, it has been repeatedly observed by many of my worthy (and some perhaps *unworthy*) predecessors in authorship, has rendered a preface almost indispensibly necessary; while others again have as frequently remarked, that “*custom is the law of fools.*” These considerations induced me to hesitate whether I should usher my performance into the world with a preface, and thus hazard being classed with the adherents to that law, or by omitting it, escape the opprobrium, for “*who shall decide when doctors disagree?*” Now though I would not take upon me to decide in every point in which doctors disagree, yet after giving the present subject that mature consideration which so important a concern required, I thought myself fully competent to decide, if not to general satisfaction, at least so as fully to satisfy

tisfy one particular person, for whom I profess to have a very great regard, though perhaps few are to be found who would be equally condescending to him, who that person is I do not wish publicly to declare, as (being a very modest man) it might offend him, I shall only say, the more you read the memoirs contained in the following pages, the better you will become acquainted with him ; I grounded my decision on these arguments ; I concluded as most of my brethren of the quill do of their labours, that my performance possessed so much intrinsic merit, as would occasion it to be universally admired by all good judges, as a prodigious effort of human genius, and that this approbation must naturally excite the envy of some authors, who had not met with that high applause *they* deemed themselves entitled to, and incline them to search for imperfections in my work, and though I was persuaded of the impossibility of their finding any,

any, yet being thus foiled, they might catch at the want of a preface, and construe *that* into an omission, so that in order to disarm them, I resolved to have one, especially as those who deem prefaces unnecessary, may, if they choose, decline reading it, whilst those on the other side of the question, if there was none, might be disappointed, and have cause for complaint; but to be *serious (if I can.)*

Almost every author on producing the effusions of his pen (and his brain if he has any) thinks it prudent to introduce himself by a kind of *Prologue*, as it may be called, stating his reasons with due precision for intruding himself on his readers (whether true or otherwise, is not always material to enquire) bespeaking their candour towards his weaknesses and imperfections (which by the bye, few authors are so sensible of as their readers) and not unfrequently endeavouring to soothe those GOLIATHS
in

in literature ycleped *critics* (with whom not many little Davids are found hardy enough to contend) believing thus to coax them into good humour, or perhaps if his vanity preponderates, he throws the gauntlet of defiance, with a view of terrifying them either to hold their peace, or do justice to those mighty abilities *he* is confident he possesses, in a degree eminently superior to most of his brethren.

For my own part, I disclaim adopting either of these modes, convinced, that in the first case, every reader, whatever the author may plead, will (and indeed ought) to judge for himself, and with regard to professed critics, were I so disposed (which I am not) neither my natural or acquired abilities enable me to *bully* those who must be very ill qualified for their task, if they were thus to be intimidated from declaring their real sentiments; and on the other hand to effect a degree of humility, and by flattery
to

to aim at warping their minds, is in my opinion, paying them a very bad compliment.

So much for others—now for myself:

Never should I have ventured to appear in this habit before the public, had not the following motives urged me thereto:

Many friends have frequently expressed a desire of obtaining from myself such particulars as they could rely on, of my passage through life, and many enemies (for such I have in common with other men, from the monarch down to the poor cobbler) have been industrious in propagating whatever reports they thought would best tend to impede my farther progress; among the rest, the editors of a periodical publication now on the decline (whether deservedly or not, let others determine) thought proper to exhibit me as they have done many much more eminent and distinguished characters, in a literary portrait, containing a few outlines

lines it is true, but with some features which they must have known to be false.

After having been repeatedly *threatened* by a very particular friend and others, that if I declined drawing up a narrative, they were determined to do it for me, the first mentioned gentleman prevailed on me (as the most likely mode to bring it to a period) to devote now and then a spare hour in minuting down some of the most material occurrences of my life, and to send them to him in an epistolary form, intending to digest the whole into a regular narrative for publication, that gentleman however, on perusal was of opinion that it would be additionally acceptable to the curious part of the public, if exhibited to them in the plain and simple manner in which they were written, as thus tending to display such traits and features of a somewhat original character, as would give a more perfect idea of “ I, great I, the little hero of each tale,”

tale," than any other mode that could have been adopted, especially as many *intelligent* persons were confident I could not write at all, while others *kindly* attributed to me what I never wrote.

If among the multitude of memoirs under which the press has groaned, and with which it still continues to be tortured, the following sheets should afford some degree of entertainment, as a relaxation from more grave and solid studies, to an inquisitive and candid reader (those of an opposite description are not to be pleased with the ablest performance) and he should deem it not the worst, nor the most expensive among the numerous tribe, I shall esteem myself amply rewarded; had I, however, been disposed to be more attentive to entertainment, and less to veracity, I might to many have rendered it much more agreeable, though less satisfactory to myself, as I believe the observation

vation long since made to be just, that few books are so ill written, but that something may be gleaned from their perusal.

Should the insignificance of *my* life induce any person better qualified to present the world with *his*, big with interesting events, my disposing of several large editions of that performance will afford me more *solid* satisfaction as a *bookseller*, than any success or emolument which can possibly arise from this, my first, and most probably last, essay as an *author*.

If unfortunately any of my kind readers should find the book so *horrid dull* and *stupid*, that they cannot get through it, or if they do, and wish not to travel the same road again, I here declare my perfect readiness to supply them with abundance of books, much more learned, much more entertaining, much more witty, much more — whatever they please, they never shall want

want books while L. is able to assist them; and whether they prefer one of his writing, or that of any other author, he protests he will not be in the smallest degree offended: let every author make the same declaration if he can.

Should my memoirs be attended with no other benefit to society, they will at least tend to shew what may be effected by a persevering habit of industry, and an upright conscientious demeanour in trade towards the public, and probably inspire some one of perhaps superior abilities, with a laudable ambition, to emerge from obscurity, by a proper application of those talents with which Providence has favoured him, to his own credit and emolument, as well as the benefit of the community. To such an one I ever have, and ever shall wish every possible success, as it has uniformly been my opinion, that whatever is thus acquired, is more honourable to the parties than the possession of wealth obtained without any intrinsic merit or exertion, and,

which is too frequently consumed with rapidity in the pursuit of vice and dissipation.

One word to my old *friends* the booksellers under *number three* of my dedication. This publication it is to be expected will tend to excite some degree of mirth in them. Conscious that I have often been the cause (however unintentional on my part) of exciting less pleasing sensations in them, I will readily allow them full scope ; however, according to the well known adage, “ Let them laugh who win,” I hope they will indulge me in the same propensity of laughing if not *at* them, at least *with* them.

As a proof of my friendly disposition, I shall here add a piece of advice, which I do not hesitate to pronounce will, if attended to, entitle them to promotion into my *first* class of booksellers, and eventually prove more beneficial than a constant perseverance in the mode of conduct they have hitherto pursued ; and those who have children will

I hope

I hope see the propriety of inculcating the same doctrine to them for their future benefit; and as I flatter myself my advice will prove equally productive of benefit to great numbers of the community at large as to book-sellers. It is this,

If they observe any person by industry and application endeavouring to obtain an honest livelihood in that line for which his talents or disposition have qualified him, never to attempt by dark inuendos, sly hints, and false aspersions to injure him, as, if he happens to be a man of a becoming spirit, such conduct will only tend to increase his exertions, and render him still more cautious to obtain a good character, in so doing their weapons will recoil on themselves, and they will have the mortification to see him flourish, whilst they become objects of contempt in the eyes of the public, and will of course be avoided by them.

But I forget myself, from debating whether a preface was really necessary or not, if I proceed thus I shall produce one as long as my book, as indeed some of my seniors in authorship have done before me, though not altogether consistent with propriety.

I will therefore conclude with a wish that my readers may enjoy the feast with the same good humour with which I have prepared it; they will meet with some *solid* though not much *coarse* food, and the major part I hope light and easy of digestion; those with keen appetites will partake of each dish, while others more delicate may select such dishes as are more light and better adapted to their palates; they are all genuine British fare, one dish of French constitution *ragout* excepted. But lest they should be at a loss to know what the entertainment consists of, I beg leave to inform them that it contains forty-five dishes of various sizes, which (if they

they calculate the expence of their *admission tickets*) they will find does not amount to *three halfpence* per dish ; and what I hope they will consider as *immensely* valuable, (in compliance with the precedent of a modern author, eminent in the culinary science) a striking likeness of their *Cook* into the bargain.

I have also prepared a bill of fare—here it is, they are heartily welcome, and much good may it do them.

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THE LIFE OF
J. LACKINGTON,
BOOKSELLER.

LETTER I.

“ Others with wishful eyes on Glory look,
“ When they have got their picture toward a book,
“ Or pompous title, like a gaudy Sign
“ Meant to betray dull fots to wretched wine,
“ If at his title L—— had dropt his quill,
“ L—— might have past for a great genius still;
“ But L——, alas! (excuse him if you can)
“ Is now a Scribler, who was once a man.

Young's Love of Fame.

Dear Friend,

YOU have often requested me to devote what few leisure moments I could spare in minutating down some of the principal occurrences of my life, with a view, sooner or later, of exhibiting the account to the public eye; who, as you were pleased to say, could not but be somewhat curious to learn some well-

B

au-

authenticated particulars of a man, well known to have risen from an obscure origin to a degree of notice, and to a participation of the favor of the Public, in a particular line of business, I may without vanity say, hitherto unprecedented.

Ever willing to pay a becoming deference to the judgment of a person of your acknowledged merits, and whom I have the felicity of numbering among my firmest friends, yet being less anxious to appear as an adventurer among the numerous tribe of authors, than to continue a considerable vender of the produce of their labors, I have continually delayed complying with your kind wishes.— By the bye, does the publication of a Catalogue of Books entitle the compiler to the name of *Author* ? If it does, many Booksellers have long had a claim to that distinction, by the annual publication of their Catalogues, and myself, as *author* of a very voluminous one every six months. The reason for my asking this question, is, I last year observed a
certain

certain bookseller published his first Catalogue with this introduction:—"As this is the first Catalogue ever the AUTHOR made, and is done in great haste, he hopes inaccuracies will be treated with lenity."

But to return from this digression. I should probably have still delayed compiling my narrative, if the editors of a certain periodical publication, who monthly labor to be witty, had not deemed me of sufficient consequence to introduce into their work, what they are pleased to call a *Portrait* of me ! and though it was by them intended as a caricatura, yet I am persuaded it will appear to those who best know me, as a daubing more characteristic of the heavy brush of a manufacturer of signs, than the delicate pencil of a true portrait painter ; and on that account I should most certainly have considered it as unworthy notice, had they not daubed me with false features. This at once determined my wavering resolution, and I am now fully resolved to minute down such particulars of my passage

through life, as, though not adorned with an elegance of stile, will I assure you possess, what, to you, I flatter myself, will be a greater recommendation, viz. a strict adherence to truth. And though no doubt you will meet with some occurrences in which you may find cause for censure, yet I hope others will present themselves, which your candour will induce you to commend. Should you be able to afford the whole a patient perusal, and think the account meriting the public eye, I shall cheerfully submit to your decision, convinced that you will not,

“ With mean complacence e’er betray your trust,

“ Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.”

John Dunton, a brother *Bibliopole*, long since exhibited a whole volume of dullness, which he called his “ Life and *errors*.” The latter term I believe might be a very proper appendage to the title page of the innumerable lives which have been, and which will be published : For what man will dare to say of himself, his life has not been loaded with errors ?

rors? That mine has been such, I readily acknowledge: And should this narrative be published, many perhaps may deem that act another (possibly the greatest) error. To those I shall only observe, that “to err is human, to forgive divine.”

As an additional stimulus, I can assure you as an absolute fact, that several gentlemen have at different periods (one very lately) intimated to me their intentions of engaging in the task, if I longer declined it.

Of my first-mentioned *kind Biographers* I shall take my leave with a couplet, many years since written by an eminent poet, and not inapplicable to the present case,

“Let B— charge low Grub-Street on my quill,
“And write whate’er he please, except MY WILL.

And of you, after informing you, my next shall contain a faithful account of Particulars relative to the part of my life, with assuring you, that I am,

Dear Friend,

Your ever obliged.

B 3

LET-

 LETTER II.

" Why should my birth keep down my mounting Spirit ?
 " Are not all creatures subject unto time ;
 " To time, who doth abuse the world,
 " And fills it full of hotch-podge bastardy ?
 " There's legions now of beggars on the Earth,
 " That their original did spring from Kings ;
 " And many monarchs now, whose fathers were
 " The riff-raff of their age ; for time and fortune
 " Wears out a noble train to beggary ;
 " And from the Dunghill millions do advance
 " To State ; and mark, in this admiring world
 " This is the course, which in the name of fate
 " Is seen as often as it whirls about ;
 " The river Thames that by our door doth run,
 " His first beginning, is but small and shallow,
 " Yet keeping on his course grows to a sea.

Shakespear's Cromwell.

Dear Friend,

I N my last I hinted that I should confine
 myself to a plain narrative of facts unem-
 bellished with the meretricious aid of lofty
 figures, or representations of things which
 never

never had existence, but in the brain of the author. I shall therefore not trouble you with a history of predictions which foretold the future greatness of your humble servant, nor with a minute account of the aspects of the Planets at the very auspicious and important crisis when first I inhaled the air of this bustling orb ; for, extraordinary as it may appear, it has never yet occurred to me that any of the adepts in the astrological science have made a calculation of my nativity ; 'tis probable this high honor is by the planets destined to adorn the sublime lucubrations of the very ingenious Mr. SIBLEY, in the next edition of his stupendous work ! And here, for the honor of the craft, let me remark, that this most sublime genius, has with myself, to boast (and who would not boast of their genealogy in having a prince for their ancestor ?) in being a Son of the renowned PRINCE CRISPIN.

A Volume has been written with the title of “ The Honor of the Taylors ; or the History of Sir JOHN HAWKWOOD.” But were

any learned writer to undertake—The Honor of the Shoemakers, or the History of——, how insignificant a figure would the poor Taylors make, when compared with the honorable craft !

“ Coblers from Crispin boast their Public Spirit,
 “ And all are upright downright men of merit.”

Should I live to see as many editions of my History published, as there have been of the Pilgrim's Progress, I may be induced to present the world with a Folio on that important subject.

But to begin :

Were I inclined to pride myself in genealogical descent, I might here boast that the family were originally settled at White Lackington, in Somersetshire, which obtained its name from one of my famous ancestors, and give you a long detail of their grandeur, &c. but having as little leisure as inclination to boast of what if true would add nothing to my merits, I shall for the present only say, that I was born at Wellington in Somersetshire, on the 31st of August,

August, (old style) 1746. My father George Lackington, was a Journeyman Shoemaker, who had incurred the displeasure of my grandfather for marrying my mother, whose maiden name was Joan Trott. She was the daughter of a poor weaver in Wellington; a good honest man, whose end was remarkable, though not very fortunate; in the road between Taunton and Wellington, he was found drowned in a ditch, where the water scarcely covered his face: He was, 'tis conjectured,

“ ————Drunk when he died.”

This happened some years before the marriage of my Father and mother.

My Grandfather George Lackington had been a Gentleman Farmer at Langford, a village two miles from Wellington, and acquired a pretty considerable property. But my father's mother dying when my father was but about thirteen years of age, my Grandfather, who had two daughters, bound my father an apprentice to a Mr. Hordly, a master shoe-maker, in Wellington, with an intention
of

of setting him up in that business at the expiration of his time. But my father worked a year or two as a journeyman, and then displeased his father by marrying a woman without a shilling, of a mean family, and who supported herself by spinning of wool into yarn, so that my mother was delivered of your friend and humble servant, her first-born, and hope of the family, in my grandmother Trott's poor cottage; and that good old woman carried me privately to church, unknown to my father who was (nominally) a Quaker, that being the religion of his ancestors.

About the year 1750, my father having three or four children, and my mother proving an excellent wife, my grandfather's resentment had nearly subsided, so that he supplied him with money to open a shop for *himself*. But that which was intended to be of very great service to him and his family eventually proved extremely unfortunate to himself and them. For as soon as he found he was more at ease in his circumstances he contracted

contracted a fatal habit of drinking, and of course his business was neglected; so that after several fruitless attempts of my grandfather to keep him in trade, he was, partly by a very large family, but more by his habitual drunkenness, reduced to his old state of a journeyman shoemaker: Yet so infatuated was he with the love of liquor, that the endearing ties of husband and father could not restrain him: by which baneful habit himself and family were involved in the extremest poverty.

“ To mortal men great loads allotted be;
“ But of all packs, no pack like poverty.”

Herrick.

so that neither myself, my Brothers, or Sisters are indebted to a Father scarcely for any thing that can endear his memory, or cause us to reflect on him with pleasure.

“ Children, the blind effects of Love and chance
“ Bear from their birth the impression of a Slave.”

Dryden.

my father and mother might have said, with Middleton,

“ How

“ How adverse runs the destiny of some creatures !

“ Some only can get riches and no children.

“ We only can get children and no riches ;

“ Then 'tis the prudent part to check our will,

“ And, till our state rise, make our blood stand still,

But to our mother we are indebted for every thing. “ She was a woman, take her for all in all, I shall not see her like again.” Never did I know or hear of a woman who worked and lived so hard as she did to support Eleven children : and were I to relate the particulars, it would not gain credit. So I shall only observe, that for many years together, she worked generally nineteen or twenty hours out of every twenty-four ; even when very near her time, sometimes at one hour she was seen walking backwards and forwards by her Spinning-wheel, and her midwife sent for the next.

Out of love to her family. she totally abstained from every kind of Liquor, water excepted, her food was chiefly broth, (little better than water and oatmeal) turnips, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, &c. her children fared some-

something better, but not much, as you may well suppose. When I reflect on the astonishing hardships and sufferings of so worthy a woman, and her helpless infants, I find myself ready to curse the husband and father that could thus involve them in such a deplorable scene of misery and distress. Yet heaven forbid that I should imprecate its vengeance on my father, who has been long since laid in his Grave: I had better conclude with the admonition in the old ballad,

“ Learn to be wise by others harm”

“ And you shall do full well.”

and my sincere Love to you,

my Dear Friend.

LETTER

LETTER III.

“Some venial frailties you may well forgive.”

Francis's Horace.

Dear Friend,

AS I was the eldest, and my father being for the first few years a careful hard-working man, I fared something better than my brothers and sisters. I was put for two or three years to a day-school kept by an old woman; and I well remember how proud I used to be to see several ancient dames lift up their hands and eyes with astonishment, while I repeated by memory several chapters out of the New Testament, concluding me from this specimen to be a prodigy of science. But my career of learning was soon at an end, when my mother got so poor that she could not afford two-pence per week for my

my schooling. Besides I was obliged to supply the place of a nurse to several of my brothers and sisters. The consequence of which was, that what little I had learned was presently forgot ; and instead of learning to read, &c. it very early became my chief delight to excel in all kinds of boyish mischiefs : and I soon arrived to be the captain and leader of all the boys in the neighbourhood, so that if any old woman's lanthorn was kicked out of her hand, or drawn up a sign-post, or if any thing was fastened to her tail, or if her door was nailed up, I was sure to be accused as the author, whether I really were so or not.

But one of my tricks had nearly proved fatal to me. I had observed that *yawning* was infectious ; and with a determination to have some sport, I collected several boys together one market-day evening, and instructed them to go amongst the butchers ; whether I accompanied them. We placed ourselves at proper distances, and at a signal
given

given, all began to yawn as wide as we could : which immediately had the desired effect ; the whole butcher row was set a yawning ; on which I and my companions burst out into a hearty laugh, and took to our heels. The trick pleased us so well, that two or three weeks after, we attempted to renew it. But one of the butchers, who was half drunk, perceiving our intention, snatched up his cleaver and threw it at me, which knocked off my hat without doing me any harm.

I was about ten years of age, when a man began to cry *apple-pies* about the streets, I took great notice of his methods of selling his pies, and thought I could do it much better than him. I communicated to a neighbouring baker my thoughts on the subject in such a manner as gave him a very good opinion of my abilities for a pie merchant, and he prevailed on my father to let me live with him. My manner of crying pies, and my activity in selling them, soon made me the favorite of all such as purchased halfpenny apple-pies, and half-

halfpenny plumb-puddings, so that in a few weeks the old pie-merchant shut up his shop. I lived with this Baker about twelve or fifteen months, in which time I sold such large quantities of pies, puddings, cakes, &c. that he often declared to his friends, in my hearing, that I had been the means of extricating him from the embarrassing circumstances in which he was known to be involved prior to my entering his service.

During the time I continued with this Baker, many complaints were repeatedly made against me for the childish follies I had been guilty of, such as throwing snow-balls, frightening people by flinging serpents and crackers into their houses, &c. I also happened one day to overturn my master's son, a child about four years old, whom I had been driving in a wheel-barrow. Dreading the consequences, I immediately flew from my master's house, and (it being evening) went to a glazier's, and procured a parcel of broken glass; I also provided

C

myself

myself with a pocketful of peas; and thus equipped made fine diversion for myself and my unlucky companions, by going to a number of houses one after another, discharging a handful of pease at the windows, and throwing down another handful of glass in the street at the same instant, which made such a noise as very much frightened many people, who had no doubt of their windows being broken into a thousand pieces. This adventure, together with throwing the child out of the wheel-barrow, produced such a clamour against me amongst the old women, that I would not return to my master, and not knowing what else to do, I went home to my father, who, you may easily conceive could not afford to keep me idle, so I was soon set down by his side to learn his own Trade; and I continued with him several years, working when he worked, and while he was keeping *Saint Monday*, I was with boys of my own age fighting, cudgel playing, wrestling, &c. &c.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R IV.

“ Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
 “ Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
 “ That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand,
 “ O’er some new-open’d grave: and (strange to tell !)
 “ Evanishes at crowing of the cock.

Dear Friend,

I Must not forget an odd adventure that happened when I was about twelve years of age, as it tends to shew in part my dauntless disposition, which discovered itself on many occasions in the very early part of my life.

I had one day walked with my father to Holy-well lake, a village two miles from Wellington, where meeting with some good ale, he could not find in his heart to part from it until late at night. When we were returning home by the way of Rockwell-Green, (commonly called Rogue-Green,

from a gang of robbers and house breakers which formerly lived there) having just passed the bridge, we were met by several men and women, who appeared to be very much frightened, being in great agitation. They informed us that they were returning back to Rogue-Green, in order to sleep there that night. They having been prevented from going home to Wellington by a dreadful Apparition, which they all had seen in the hollow way, about a quarter of a mile distant ; adding, that a person had been murdered there formerly, and that the ghost had walked there ever since ; that they had never before paid much attention to the well-known report ; but now they were obliged to credit it, having had ocular demonstration. My father had drank too large a quantity of ale to be much afraid of any thing, and I (who could not let slip such an opportunity of shewing my courage) seconded matters for the poor terrified people to return with us ;

and

and as I offered to lead the van, they were prevailed on to make the attempt once more; but said, that it was rather presumptuous, and hoped that no dreadful consequence would ensue, as all the company, they trusted, were honest-hearted, and intended no harm to any person: they moreover added, that "God certainly was above the Devil." I then advanced, and kept before the company about fifty yards.

"Whistling aloud to bear my courage up."

But when we had walked about a quarter of a mile, I saw, at some distance before, in the hedge, the dreadful apparition that had so terrified our company. Here it is! (said I) "Lord have mercy upon us!" replied some of the company, making a full stop; and would have gone back again, but shame prevented them. I still kept my distance before, and called out to them to follow me,—assuring them that I was determined to see what *it* was. They then fell one behind another,

and advanced in single files. As I proceeded I too was seized with a timid apprehension, but durst not own it; but still kept on before, although I perceived my hair to heave my hat from my head, and my teeth to chatter in my mouth. In fact I was greatly agitated at what I saw, the object much resembled the human figure as to shape, but the size was prodigious. However, I had promised to see what it was, and for that purpose, I obstinately ventured on about thirty yards from the place where I first had sight of it. I then perceived that it was only a very short tree, whose limbs had been newly cut off, the doing of which had made it much resemble a giant. I then called to the company, and informed them, with a hearty laugh, that they had been frightened at the stump of a tree.

This story caused excellent diversion for a long time afterwards in Wellington, and I was mentioned as an hero.

The

The pleasure and satisfaction I received from the discovery, and the honour I acquired for the courage I possessed in making it, has, I believe, had much influence on me ever after ; as I cannot recollect that in any one instance I have ever observed the least fear of apparitions, spirits, &c. since.

“ What education did at first receive,

“ Our ripen'd age confirms us to believe.”

Pomfret.

Not that I have always steadily disbelieved what has been related of such appearances, a few accounts of which seem so well authenticated, as at least to make me doubt whether there might not exist in the scale of beings some of a more aerial substance than mankind, who may possess both the inclination and the power of assuming our shape, and may perhaps take as much delight in teasing the human species, as too many of our species do in teasing and even tormenting those of the brute creation.

“ Some astral forms I must invoke by pray’r ;
 “ Fram’d all of purest atoms of the air :
 “ In airy chariots they together ride,
 “ And sip the dew, as thro’ the clouds they glide ;
 “ Vain spirits, You, that shunning heaven’s high noon,
 “ Swarm here beneath the concave of the moon,
 “ Hence to the task, assign’d you here below !
 “ Upon the ocean make loud tempests blow ;
 “ Into the wombs of hollow clouds repair,
 “ And crash out thunder from the bladder’d air ;
 “ From pointed sun-beams take the mists they drew,
 “ And scatter them again in pearly dew :
 “ And of the bigger drops they drain below,
 “ Some mould in hail, and others sift in snow.”

Dryden.

While I am on this subject, I cannot resist the temptation of relating a truly ridiculous affair that happened about this time at Taunton.

In the work-house belonging to the Parish of St. James, there lived a young woman who was an idiot : This poor creature had a great aversion to sleeping in a bed, and at bed-time would often run away to a field in the neighbourhood called the Priory, where she slept in the cow-sheds.

In

In order to break her of this bad custom, two men agreed to try if they could not frighten her out of it. And one night, when they knew that she was there, they took a white sheet with them, and coming to the place, one of the men concealed himself to see the event, while the other wrapped himself up in the sheet, and walked forwards and backwards close before the cowshed in which she was laid. It was some time before Molly paid any attention to the apparition ; but at last up she got." Aha !" (said she) " a white devil !" and by her manner of expressing herself she thought it was very strange to see a *white* devil. And soon after she exclaimed, " a black devil, too ! a black devil, too !" With that the man who had the sheet on, looked over his shoulder, and saw (or imagined that he saw) a person all over black behind him ; the sight of which made him take to his heels. Molly then clapped her hands as fast as she could, crying out at the same time,

" Run,

“ Run, black devil, and catch white devil !
Run, black devil, and catch white devil !” and
was highly diverted. But this proved a serious
adventure to the white devil, as he expired
within a few minutes after he had reached his
own house ; and from that time poor Molly
was left alone to sleep in peace.

About ten years after the above affair, at
Wilkfcome, nine miles from Taunton, a
gentleman farmer's house was alarmed every
night between twelve and one o'clock. The
chamber doors were thrown open, the bed
cloaths pulled off the beds, and the kitchen
furniture thrown with violence about the
kitchen, to the great terror of the family,
infomuch that the servants gave their master
and mistress warning to leave their places, and
some of them actually quitted their service.
This dreadful affair had lasted about six weeks,
when a young gentleman who was there on a
visit, being in bed one night, at the usual hour
he heard his chamber door thrown open, and a
very

very odd noise about his room. He was at first frightened, but the noise continuing a long time, he became calm and laid still, revolving what he had best do. When on a sudden he heard the spirit creep under his bed, which was immediately lifted up, &c. This convinced him that there was some substance in the spirit; on which he leaped out of bed and secured the door, and with his oaken staff belaboured the ghost under the bed as hard as he could, until he heard a female voice imploring for mercy. On that he opened his chamber door, and called aloud for a light. The family all got up as fast as possible, and came to his room. He then informed them that he had got the spirit under the bed; on hearing which, most of them were terribly frightened, and would have run off faster than they came, but he assured them, they had nothing to fear: then out he dragged the half-murdered spirit from under the bed. But how great was their surprise and shame, when
they

they discovered that this tormenting devil was no other than one of their fervant girls, about sixteen years of age, who had been confined to her bed feveral months by illnefs.

This ghofl was no fooner laid, than two others alarmed the neighbourhood ; one of which for a long time fhook a houfe every night, and terribly diftreffed the family ; at length they all refolved one night to go over the whole houfe in a body, and fee what it was that fo agitated the building. They examined every room ; but in vain, as no caufe could be difcovered. So they very ferioufly as well as unanimoufly concluded, that it mufl be *the devil*.

But about a fortnight after this, one of the family being out late in the garden, faw a great boy get in at the window of an old houfe next door, (part of which was in ruins) and foon after the houfe began to fhake as ufual, on which the family went out of their own habitation and entered the old houfe where the boy was feen to get in ; yet for a long
time

time they could not discover any person, and were just turning to come out again, when one of the company observed the boy over their head, striding over the end of a large beam that ran across both houses.

It was then apparent that the violent agitation of the adjoining house was occasioned by nothing more than his leaping up and down on the unsupported end of this beam.

Another apparition had for a long time stole many geese, turkeys, &c. and although it had been seen by many, yet nobody would venture to go near it: until at length one person a little wiser than the rest of his neighbours, seeing the famous apparition all over white stealing his fowls, was determined to be fully satisfied what kind of spirit it could be that had so great a predilection for poultry. He accordingly went round the yard, and as the apparition was coming over the wall, he knocked it down, and found that this terrible ghost was a neighbouring woman, who had put on her shroud, in order to deter any persons should they

they by chance see her, from coming near her. Thus, though she had for a long time successfully practised this new way of procuring poultry, the old fox was caught at last.

This is so prolific a subject, that I could fill many pages with relations of dreadful spectres, which for a while have reigned with tyrannic sway over weak minds, and at length when calm Reason was suffered to assume its power, they have been discovered to be no more objects of terror than those I have here noticed. But doubtless many such instances must have occurred to you.

It has indeed often astonished me, that in this enlightened age, there should yet remain numbers, not in the country only, but even in the Metropolis, who suffer themselves to be made miserable by vain fears of preternatural occurrences, which generally owe their origin to the knavery of some ill-disposed person, who has a sinister purpose to answer thereby, or to the foolish desire of alarming the
minds

minds of weak people : a practice sometimes (though intended as *fun*) productive of very serious consequences. Now and then, indeed, these terrors are owing to accident and ridiculous causes. As an instance, I shall give you the account of a terrible alarm which some years since took place in an Hospital of this city, as related to me by a Gentleman then resident in the house, who was completing his Medical education, and on whose veracity I can confidently rely.

For several nights successively, a noise had been heard in the lower part of the building ; like the continual tapping against a window ; which led the night nurses *wisely* to conclude it must certainly be occasioned by the Spirit of one of the bodies deposited in the dead-house, wishing to make its escape that way, the sound seeming to proceed from that particular quarter. The dread of these *sagacious ladies* at last became such, as totally to prevent their going from ward to ward to do their duty, and

and determined my friend to attempt to lay this perturbed spirit; which however he apprehended would more speedily, as well as effectually be performed by the assistance of a good cudgel, than by any exorcisms; he therefore instead of consulting the Chaplain, gave orders the next night as soon as the usual *dreadful sound* was heard, to give him notice. This you may suppose they did not neglect doing, though at the same time they were shocked at his temerity, and apprehensive for the consequences. He immediately sallied forth, with a candle in one hand, and a good tough twig in the other, accompanied by two of the men servants of the Hospital, accoutred in the same manner. The dead-house was passed; the noise continued; though it evidently proceeded from a window at some distance in the area. When the cavalcade came near the scene of action, the window suddenly and violently broke, without any thing being seen. This my friend confessed, for a moment
to

occasion his making a halt ; but as nothing visible had escaped through the area, it occurred to him something might have made an entrance that way : accordingly he proceeded to the internal part of the building, and on opening the door, the apparition immediately not only appeared, but disappeared, and that so instantaneously as not to afford time to apply the remedy intended. And what, think you, was this dreadful spirit ? That you may exercise your ingenuity at guessing, I will here conclude, with, Dear Friend,

Yours, &c.

D

LET-

LETTER V.

“ — Were thy education ne’er so mean,
“ Having thy limbs, a thousand fair courses
“ Offer themselves to thy election.

Ben. Johnson’s Every man in his humour.

Dear Friend,

A CAT. — An odd beginning of a Letter, by the bye—but here highly important and proper, as tending to relieve you from the anxious thoughts which (no doubt) must have filled your mind on the subject of the concluding part of my former letter. Having now, I dare say, had enough of *Ghostesses*, I will proceed with my narration.

During the time that I lived with the Baker, my name became so celebrated for selling a large number of pies, puddings, &c. that for several years following, application
was

was made to my father, for him to permit me to sell almanacks a few market days before and after Christmas. In this employ I took great delight, and the country people were highly pleased with me, and bought a great number of my Almanacks, which excited envy in the itinerant venders of Moore, Wing, Poor Robin, &c. to such a degree, that my father often expressed his anxiety lest they should some way or other do me a mischief. But I had not the least concern, for as I had a light pair of heels, I always kept at a proper distance.

O my friend, little did I think at that time, that I ever should excite the same poor mean spirit in many of the Booksellers of London and other places ! but,

“ Envy at last crawls forth, from hell’s dire throng,
 “ Of all the direfull’st ! her black locks hung long,
 “ Attir’d with curling serpents ; her pale skin
 “ Was almost drop’d from her sharp bones within,
 “ And at her breast stuck vipers, which did prey
 “ Upon her panting heart both night and day,
 “ Sucking black blood from thence : which to repair,

“ Both day and night they left fresh poisons there.
 “ Her garments were deep-stain’d with human gore,
 “ And torn by her own hands, in which she bore
 “ A knotted whip and bowl, which to the brim,
 “ Did green gall, and the juice of wormwood swim;
 “ With which when she was drunk, she furious grew,
 “ And lash’d herself; thus from the accursed crew,
 “ Envy the worst of fiends, herself presents,
 “ Envy, good only, when she herself torments.”

Cowley.

“ ———The true condition of Envy, is,
 “ *Dolor alienæ felicitatis*; to have
 “ Our eyes continually fix’d upon another
 “ Man’s prosperity, that is, his chief happiness,
 “ And to grieve at that.”

I was fourteen years and a half old, when
 I went with my father to work at Taunton,
 seven miles from Wellington. We had been
 there about a fortnight, when my father in-
 formed our master, George Bowden, that he
 would return to Wellington again. Mr.
 Bowden was then pleased to inform my fa-
 ther that he had taken a liking to me, and
 advised him to bind me an apprentice to him,
 I seconded Mr. Bowden’s motion (as I had a
 better prospect in continuing with Mr. Bow-
den

den than in returning to Wellington with my father) and as he offered to take me without any premium and to find me in every thing, my father accepted his offer, and I was immediately bound an apprentice for seven years to Mr. George and Mrs Mary Bowden, as honest and worthy a couple as ever carried on a trade.

“ Religious, punctual, frugal, and so forth ;

“ Their word would pass for more than they were worth.”

Pope.

They carefully attended to their shop six days in the week, and on the seventh went with their family twice to an anabaptist meeting; where little attention was paid to speculative doctrines ; but where sound morality was constantly inculcated.

“ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,

“ His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

But in this, as in many other places of worship, it was done in a dull spiritless manner : so that the excellent morality taught there was not so much attended to as it would have

been had it been enforced, or reenforced, by the captivating powers of oratory.

I well remember, that although I constantly attended this place, it was a year or two before I took the least notice of the sermon, which was read; nor had I any idea that I had the least concern in what the minister was preaching (as 'tis called) about. For,

“ Who a cold, dull, lifeless, drawling keeps,
 “ One half his audience laughs, whilst t'other sleeps.

* * * * *

“ Sermons, like plays, some please us at the ear,
 “ But never will a serious reading bear;
 “ Some in the closet edify enough,
 “ That from the pulpit seem'd but sorrow stuff.
 “ 'Tis thus there are who by ill reading spoil
 “ Young's pointed sense, or Atterbury's style!
 “ While others, by the force of eloquence,
 “ Make that seem fine, which scarce is common sense.
 “ But some will preach, without the least pretence,
 “ To virtue, learning, art or eloquence.
 “ Why not? you cry: they plainly see, no doubt—
 “ A priest may grow *right reverend* without.”

Art of Preaching.

I am, Dear Friend, yours, &c.

LET—

L E T T E R VI.

“ Youth is the stock whence grafted superstition,
“ Shoots with unbounded vigor.

Miller's Mahomet.

Dear Friend,

AT the time that I was bound an Apprentice, my Master had two sons, the eldest about seventeen years old, the youngest fourteen. The eldest had just been baptized, and introduced as a member of the dipping Community where my master and his family attended. The boy was a very sober industrious youth, and gave his father and mother much pleasure. The youngest was also a good lad. Thus every thing continued well for some time after I had been added to the family. Both of the boys had very good natural parts, and had learned to read, write, keep accounts,

counts, &c. But they had been at schools where no variety of books had been introduced; so that all they had read was the Bible: My master's whole library consisted of a school-size Bible, Watts's Psalms and Hymns, Foot's Tract on Baptism, Culpepper's Herbal, The History of Gentle Craft, an old imperfect volume of Receipts in Physic, Surgery, &c. and the Ready Reckoner. The ideas of the family were as circumscribed as their Library; my Master called attention to business and working hard, *minding* "*the main-chance.*" On Sundays all went to meeting. My Master, on that day, said a short grace before dinner, and the boys read a few chapters in the Bible, took a walk for an hour or two, then read a chapter or two more, supped, and went early to bed, perfectly satisfied with having done their duty; and each having a quiet conscience soon fell into the Arms of

"Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

I cannot here omit mentioning a very singular custom of my master's. Every morning, at all seasons of the year, and in all weathers, he rose about three o'clock, took a walk by the river's side round Trenchware fields, stopt at some place or other to drink half a pint of ale, came back before six o'clock and called up his people to work, and went to bed again about seven.

Thus was the good man's family jogging easily and quietly on; no one doubting but he should go to heaven when he died, and every one hoping it would be a good while first.

But alas! the dreadful crisis was at hand, that put an end to the happiness and peace of this little family. I had been an apprentice about twelve or fifteen months, when my master's eldest son George happened to go and hear a sermon preached by one of Mr. Wesley's Preachers, who had left the plow-tail to preach the *pure* and *unadulterated* Gospel of Christ. By this sermon the fallow
ground

ground of poor George's heart was harrowed up, he was now persuaded that the innocent and good life he had led would only sink him deeper into hell : in short he found out that he had never been converted, and of course was in a state of damnation, without benefit of Clergy. But he did not long continue in this damnable state, but soon became one of those

“—Errant Saints, whom all men grant
 “ To be the true Church militant.”

Butler.

He persuaded himself that he had passed through the *New Birth*, and was quite sure that his name was registered in the Book of Life, and (to the great grief of his parents) he was become a *new creature*.

George had no sooner made things sure for himself, than he began to extend his concern to his father, mother, brother, and me ; and very kindly gave us to understand, that he was sure we were in a very deplorable state,
 “ without

“without hope, and without God in the world,” being under the curse of the Law. In the long winter nights, as we sat at work together, he proved (in his way) that every man had original sin enough to damn a thousand souls; and a deal was said on that subject: Quotations were made from some *deep* author who had asserted, that there were “infants in hell but a span long;” and that “Hell was paved with infant skulls,” &c. As to Morality, George assured us it was of no avail; that as for good works, they were only splendid sins; and that in the best good work that any creature could perform, there was sin enough to sink the doer to the nethermost hell: That it was *Faith* alone that did every thing, without a grain of morality; but that no man could have one particle of this mysterious Faith, before he was justified; and that *justification* was a sudden operation on the soul, by which the most execrable wretch that ever lived might instantaneously be

be assured of all his sins being pardoned ; that his body from that very moment became the living temple of the Holy Ghost, that he had fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Spirit was to be their constant and infallible guide : and that

“ Whate’er men speak by this new light,
 “ Still they were sure to be in the right.
 “ This dark-lanthorn of the spirit,
 “ Which none see by but those that bear it ;
 “ A light that falls down from on high,
 “ For spiritual trades to cozen by ;
 “ An ignis fatuus, that bewitches
 “ And leads men into pools and ditches,
 “ This light inspires and plays upon
 “ The noise of Saint, like bagpipe drone,
 “ And speaks through hollow empty soul,
 “ As through a trunk, or whispering hole,
 “ Such language as no mortal ear
 “ But spiritus’l eaves-droppers can hear.”

My master very seldom heard any of these conversations, but my good mistress would sit down for hours together, with her bible in her lap, from which she would read such scriptures as proved the necessity of living a
 good

good life, performing good works, &c. she also did her best to confute the tenets of Original sin, Imputed righteousness, doctrine of the Trinity. &c. &c. Unfortunately the good woman had no great talents for controversy; however, George had a very tenacious memory, and employed all his thoughts on these subjects, so that John his younger brother, and I also (two competent judges no doubt) thought that he had the best of the arguments on these edifying subjects, and about five months after George's conversion John went to hear those only true Ambassadors from Heaven,

“ Who stroll and teach from town to town,
 “ The good old Cause: which some believe
 “ To be the devil that tempted Eve
 “ With knowledge, and do still invite
 “ The world to mischief with new light.”

Butler.

These devil-dodgers happened to be so very *powerful* (that is very noisy,) that they soon
 sent

sent John home, crying out, he should be damn'd ! he should be damn'd for ever !

But John soon got out of the damnable state, and assured us that all his sins were forgiven, that he had passed from death into life, and had union and communion with God. He now became as merry as before he had been sorrowful, and sung in Mr. Wesley's strain,

“ Not a doubt shall arise.

“ To darken the skies,

“ Nor hide for a moment my God from my Eyes.”

John sung to me, and said to me a deal in this wonderful stile, of which I did not comprehend one syllable. But these extraordinary accounts and discourses, together with the controversies between the mother and the sons, made me think that they knew many matters of which I was totally ignorant. This created in me a desire for knowledge, that I might know who was right, and who was wrong.

But

But to my great mortification, I could not read. I knew most of the letters, and a few easy words, and I set about learning with all my might. My mistress would sometimes instruct me; and having three-halfpence per week allowed me by my mother, this money I gave to John (my master's youngest son) and for every three-halfpence he taught me to spell one hour. And this was done in the dark, as we were not allowed a candle, after we were sent upstairs to bed.

I soon made a little progress in reading; and in the mean time I also went to the Methodist meeting, to hear one Thomas Bryant, known in Taunton by the name of the *damnation preacher*; (he had just left off cobbling soles of another kind.) His sermon frightened me most terribly. I soon after went to hear an old Scotchman; and he assured his congregation, that they would be damn'd, and double damn'd, and treble damn'd, and damn'd for ever, if they died without what he called

Faith

Faith. This marvellous doctrine and noisy rant and enthusiasm, soon worked on my passions, and made me believe myself to be really in the damnable condition that they represented: and in this miserable state I continued for about a month, being all that time unable to work myself up to the proper key. At last, by singing and repeating enthusiastic amorous hymns, and presumptuously applying particular texts of scripture, I got my imagination to the proper pitch, was born again in an instant, became a very great favourite of heaven, and was as familiar with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as any old woman in Mr. Wesley's connection.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's.

LET.

L E T T E R VII.

“ Religion’s lustre is by native innocence,
 “ Divinely fair, pure, and simple from all arts;
 “ You daub and dress her like a common mistress,
 “ The harlot of your fancies; and by adding
 “ False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
 “ Suspect her angel face is foul within.”

Rowe’s Tamerlane.

Dear Friend,

THE enthusiastic notions which I had imbibed, and the desire I had to be talking about religious mysteries, &c. answered one valuable purpose; as it caused me to embrace every opportunity to learn to read; so that I could soon read the easy parts of the Bible, Mr. Wesley’s Hymns, &c. and every leisure minute was so employed.

In the winter I was obliged to attend my work from six in the morning until ten at
 E night.

night. In the summer half year, I only worked as long as we could see without candle ; but notwithstanding the close attention I was obliged to pay to my trade, yet for a long time I read ten chapters in the Bible every day, I also read and learned many hymns, and as soon as I could procure some of Mr. Wesley's Tracts, Sermons, &c. I read them also ; many of them I perused in *Cloacina's* Temple, (the place where my Lord Chesterfield advised his son to read the classics.) But I did not apply them after reading to the farther use that his Lordship hints at.)

I had such good eyes, that I often read by the light of the Moon, as my master would never permit me to take a candle into my room, and that prohibition I looked upon as a kind of persecution, but I always comforted myself with the thoughts of my being a child of God ; and as such, that it was impossible for me to escape persecution from the children of the devil, which I very piously applied to my
good.

good master and mistress. And so ignorantly and imprudently zealous was I for the good of their *precious* souls, as sometimes to give them broad hints of it, and of the dangerous state they were in. Their pious good old minister, the Reverend Mr. Harrison, I called “*a blind leader of the blind* ;” and I once assured my mistress, that both he and his whole flock were in a state of damnation, being “*strangers to the hope of Israel, and without God in the world.*” My good mistress wisely thought that a good stick was the best way of arguing with such an ignorant infatuated boy as I was, and had often recourse to it ; but I took care to give her a deal of trouble ; for whenever I was ordered in my turn to read in the Bible, I always selected such chapters as I thought militated against Arians, Socinians, &c. and such verses as I deemed favourable to the doctrine of Original Sin, Justification by Faith, imputed Righteousness, the doctrine of the Trinity, &c. On such parts I always placed

a particular emphasis, which puzzled and teased the old lady a good deal.

Among other places I thought that the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel very much favoured the doctrines of original sin, imputed righteousness, &c. and that chapter I often selected and read to her, and she as often read the eighteenth chapter of the same prophecy, for the sake of the parable of the Father's eating *four grapes*.

As often as I read in St. Paul's Epistles on justification by faith alone, my good mistress would read in the Epistle of St. James, such passages as say that a man is not justified by faith alone, but by faith and works, which often embarrassed me not a little. However I comforted myself with the conceit of having more texts of Scripture on my side of the question than she had on her side. As to St. James, I was almost ready to conclude, that he was not quite orthodox, and so I did not much mind what he said.

“—False

“ —False opinions rooted in the mind,
 “ Hoodwink the soul and keep our reason blind.
 “ In controverted points can reason sway,
 “ When passion or conceit hurries us away ?”

Hitherto I had not frequented the methodist meetings by the consent or knowledge of my master and mistress ; nor had my zeal been so great as to make me openly violate their commands. But my zeal increased much faster than my knowledge, and I soon disregarded their orders, and without hesitation ran away to hear a methodistical sermon as often as I could find opportunity. One Sunday morning at eight o'clock my mistress seeing her sons set off, and knowing that they were gone to a methodist meeting, determined to prevent me from doing the same by locking the door, which she accordingly did ; on which, in a superstitious mood, I opened the Bible for direction what to do, (ignorant methodists often practise the same presumptuous method) and the first words I read were these. “ He has given his angels charge concerning thee, lest at

any time thou shouldest dash thy foot against a stone." This was enough for me. So without a moment's hesitation, I ran up two pair of stairs to my room, and out of the window I leaped, to the great terror of my poor mistress. I got up immediately, and ran about two or three hundred yards, towards the meeting-house; but alas! I could run no farther; my feet and ancles were most intolerably bruised, so that I was obliged to be carried back and put to bed; and it was more than a month before I recovered the use of my limbs. I was ignorant enough to think, (I mention it with horror and remorse!) that the Lord had not used me very well, and resolved not to put so much trust in him for the future.

This rash adventure of mine made a great noise in the town, and was talked of many miles round. Some few admired my amazing strength of faith, but the major part pitied me, as a poor ignorant, deluded and infatuated boy; which did not at all please,

Dear Friend, yours, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R VIII.

- “ One makes the rugged paths so smooth and even,
“ None but an ill-bred man can miss of heaven.
“ Another quits his stockings, breeches, shirt,
“ Because he fancies virtue dwells in dirt:
“ While all concur to take away the strefs,
“ From weightier points, and lay it on the lefs.”

Stillingfleet on Conversation.

Dear Friend,

IN the fourth year of my apprenticeship, my master died, and although he was a good husband, a good father, and a good master, &c. yet as he had not the methodistical faith, and could not pronounce the *Shibboleth* of that sect, I *piously* feared that he was gone to hell.

As I had been bound to my mistress as well as my master, I was of course an apprentice still. But after my master's death I obtained more liberty of conscience, (as I called it) so
that

that I not only went to hear the methodist sermons, but was also admitted into their Society : and I believe they never had a more devout enthusiastical member ; so that for several years I regularly attended every sermon, as well as all their private meetings.

As you are probably unacquainted with the nature of their private meetings, a short account of them may perhaps afford you some amusement.

The late Mr. Wesley instituted amongst his people, besides the public preachings, several kinds of private meetings ; and as the *prayer-meeting* is the least private of any of them, I will first take notice of that.

To the prayer-meetings they often invited people who were not of their society ; an hymn was first sung, and then they all knelt, and the first person that felt a motion, made an extemporary prayer, when he had done another began, and so on, for about two hours.

But

But it so happened sometimes, that one of the brethren began to pray without having *the gift* of prayer (as they call it), and then he often stuck fast, like some of the young orators at Coach-maker's Hall, &c. Prayer-meetings were held in such high esteem amongst them that they asserted, more were "*born again*," and more "*made free* from all the remains of sin," or in other words, of their own, "*made perfect* as God is perfect," in these kinds of meeting, than at public preaching, &c. Thus, as Pomfret says,

"The spirits heated will strange things produce."

But 'tis impossible for you, my friend, to form any just idea of these assemblies, except you had been present at them: one wheedles and coaxes the Divine Being, in his addresses; another is amorous and luscious; and a third so rude and commanding, he will even tell the Deity that he must be *a liar* (dreadful!) if he does not grant all they ask. In this manner will they work up one another's imaginations until
they

they may actually be said to be in a state of intoxication.

They have another kind of private meeting after the publick preaching on Sunday evenings, in which the preacher meets all the members of the society, who stay behind after the general congregation is dismissed. To this society Mr. Wesley gave such advice as he deemed better suited to a godly few than to a promiscuous multitude of “*outward court* worshippers.”

Their *Love-feast* is also a private meeting of as many members of the community as please to attend; and they generally come from all parts, within several miles of the place where love-feasts are held.

When all are met they alternately sing and pray; and such amongst them as think that their *experience* (as they call it) is remarkable, stand up in their place and relate all the transactions between God, the devil, and their souls. At such seasons as this I have
heard

heard many of them declare they had just received the pardon of all their sins, while Brother such-a-one was in prayer; another would then get up and assert that he was just at that instant made perfectly free from sin; and then the Spirit is supposed to be very powerfully at work amongst them; and such a *unison* of sighing and *groaning* succeeds, that you would think they had all lost their senses.

In the Love-feast they have *buns* to eat, which are mutually broken between each brother and sister, and they have also *water* to drink, which they hand from one to another. These meetings begin about seven o'clock and last until nine, or after.

In London, Bristol, and other large places, they have some *private* meetings, unknown to the community at large. These meetings consist of all married men at one time, young and unmarried men at another time: the married women by themselves, and the single women by themselves; and to each of these
 classes

classes Mr. Wesley went, and gave such advice or exhortations as he thought suitable to their situation in life, seldom failing to speak much in praise of celibacy, to the *Maids* and *Batchelors* under his pastoral care, &c. I will in my next give you an account of their watch-nights, class-meetings, bands, &c.

I am, dear Friend, yours. &c,

LET-

L E T T E R IX.

“ ——— Here Gamaliel sage
“ Trains up his babes of grace, instructed well
“ In all the ——— discipline of prayer;
“ To point the holy leer: by just degrees
“ To close the twinkling Eye; expand the palms,
“ To expose the whites, and with the fightless balls
“ To glare upon the croud: to rise, to sink
“ The docile voice; now murm’ring soft and flow,
“ With inward accent calm, and then again,
“ In foaming floods of rapt’rous eloquence,
“ Let loose the storm, and thunder thro’ the note
“ The threatened vengeance.”

Somerville.

Dear Friend,

THE *Watch-night* begins about seven o’clock. They sing hymns, pray, preach, sing, and pray again; then exhort, sing and pray alternately, until twelve o’clock; and then they depart in peace, according to the word.

Mr.

Mr. Wesley, in every place where his people were numerous, had divided them into *classes*, consisting of twelve or fourteen brothers or sisters. Sometimes men and women met together in the same *class*, (as they called it) and other classes consisted of all men or all women. Each of these classes had one in it who was called the *leader*. In such classes where men and women meet together, the leader was always a brother: and so of course when the class consisted of men alone. But in the womens classes a Sister was always the leader.

When they met together, the Leader first gave out an hymn, which they all sang: after the hymn they all kneeled down, and their leader made an extemporary prayer; after which they were seated, and when the leader had informed them of the state of his own mind, he enquired of all present, one after another, how they found the state of their souls. Some he found were full of faith
and

and *assurance*, others had dreadful doubts and fears; some had horrid temptations; others complained of a lukewarm state, &c. To each of these the leader gave a word of comfort, or of correction in the best manner he was able. They then sang and prayed again. This lasted about one hour. And every one in Mr. Wesley's connexion did, or was expected to meet, each in his own class once in a week. In these classes each made a weekly contribution towards the general support of the preachers, &c. Such as were very poor contributed a penny per week, others twopence, and some who could afford it sixpence. This money was entered in a book kept for that purpose, and one in every class called the Steward, had the care of the cash.

I now come to speak of the *Bands*, which consisted only of *justified* persons; that is such as had received the *assurance* of their sins being pardoned. In the classes, both the *awakened* (as they call them) and the justified

fied, and even those that were made *perfect*, met all together, as did the married and the single, and often men and women. But none were admitted into any *band* but such as were at least in a justified state, and the married of each sex met by themselves, and the single by themselves. About Ten was the number generally put in one Band; all these must belong to and meet in some Class, once a week, when not hindered by sickness, &c. and they were also to meet weekly in their Band. When met, they first sung, then made a short prayer: that done, the *Band-leader* informed them of the state of his mind during the last week, &c. He then made inquiry into the state of all present, and each related what had passed since they last met; as what visitations they had received from God, what temptations from the devil, the flesh, &c. And it is a maxim amongst them, that by exposing to one another what the devil has particularly tempted them to commit will
make

make the old fellow more careful how he tempts, when he knows that all his secrets will be told the next meeting.

The last time I met in band was in London ; where an old man (near seventy years of age) informed us that he had for several weeks together laboured under a very grievous temptation of the devil, who all this time had been constantly tempting of him to commit adultery ; he farther informed us, that having let too much of his house to lodgers, they were obliged to put the maid's bed in the room where he and his wife slept ; and that one morning he had seen the maid lying asleep, nearly or quite uncovered, and he again assured us that ever since that time the devil had been every day tempting him to do that which was nought with the maid. I could not help thinking the old gentleman was right in charging it on *the devil*, as there was little reason to think it was any temptation of *the flesh*. Permit me to add, that this

old Buck had a wife about half his own age. By this time I suppose you have had enough of *band-meetings*.

Mr. Wesley instituted another kind of private meeting for the highest order of his people, called the *select bands*; to which none were admitted but such as were sanctified, or made *perfect* in love, and freed from all the remains of sin. But as I never professed *perfection*, I was not permitted to enter into this holy of holies.

Four times every year new *Tickets* are distributed to all Mr. Wesley's people throughout the three kingdoms. Their ticket is a very small slip of paper, with a text of scripture on it, which is exchanged every quarter for some other text. Such as are only in a *class*, have a different text from such as are in a *band*, so that no one can be admitted into any general meeting of the bands, appointed by any of the preachers when he intends to give them an exhortation, nor into any particular

particular band, by a common society ticket. On the common tickets are such texts as these : “ Now is the accepted time”—“ Awake thou that sleepest,” and such like. But those for the *bands* are in a higher strain ; as, “ Be ye perfect as your heavenly father is perfect”—or, “ Go on unto perfection”—“ Ye are children of the light”—“ Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost ;” and other texts of a similar tendency.

I am, dear Friend, Yours, &c.

F 2

LET.



L E T T E R X.

“ Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong ;

“ Was every thing by starts and nothing long.”

* * * * *

“ Then all for women, panting, rhiming, drinking,

“ Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.”

Dear Friend,

YOU now see what sort of a Society I was got into. In country places particularly, they consist of farmers, husbandmen, shoemakers, woolcombers, weavers, their wives, &c. I have heard Mr. Wesley remark that more Women are converted than men ; and I believe that by far the greatest part of his people are females ; and not a few of them four, disappointed old maids, with some others of a less prudish disposition.

There

There are thousands in this Society who will never read any thing besides the Bible, and books published by Mr. Wesley. For several years I read very little else, nor would I go (at least very seldom) to any other place of worship; so that instead of hearing the sensible and learned ministers of Taunton, I would often go four, five, or seven miles, to some country village, to hear an inspired husbandman, shoemaker, blacksmith, woolcomber, &c. And frequently in frost and snow have I rose a little after midnight (not knowing what time of night it was) and have wandered about the town until five o'clock, when the preaching began; where I have often heard a sermon preached to not more than ten or a dozen people. But such of us as did attend at this early hour, used afterwards to congratulate each other on the great privilege we enjoyed, then off we went to our work, shivering with cold.

I was first converted to methodism when I

was about sixteen years of age, and from that time until I was twenty-one I was a very sincere enthusiast, and every spare hour I enjoyed I dedicated to the study of the Bible, reading methodistical books, learning hymns, hearing sermons, meeting in Societies, &c. My memory was very tenacious, so that every thing I read I made my own. I could have repeated several volumes of hymns; when I heard a sermon, I could have preached it again, and nearly in the same words; my bible had hundreds of leaves folded down, and thousands of marks against such texts as I thought favoured the doctrines (or whims) which I had imbibed. So that I stood forth as the champion of methodism wherever I came.

But alas! my godly strict life soon suffered interruption.

The election for two members of Parliament was strongly contested at Taunton, just as I attained my twenty-first year; and being now of age, the six or seven months, which

I had to serve of my apprenticeship were purchased of my mistress by some friends of two of the contending candidates ; so that I was at once set free in the midst of a scene of riot and dissipation.

As I had a vote, and was also possessed of a few ideas above those of my rank and situation, my company was courted by some who were in a much higher sphere ; and (probably what they partly intended) in such company I soon forgot my godly or methodistical connections, and ran into the opposite extreme : so that for several months most of my spare hours were devoted to the

“ Young-ey’d God of Wine ! Parent of joys !
 “ Frolic and full of thee, while the cold sons
 “ Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,
 “ Lay stretch’d in sober slumbers.”

Mallet’s Eurydice.

Here I had like to have sunk forever into meanness, obscurity and vice ; for when the Election was over, I had no longer open houses to eat and drink in at free cost.

However I did not sink quite so low as the commonality of journeymen shoemakers, but in general worked very hard, and spent my money in better company.

Notwithstanding, at times I was very uneasy, and although I had not been at any methodistical meeting during the time that I had lived this dissipated life, yet my mind was not freed intirely from the superstitious fears I had there imbibed: so that whenever any person asked me, what would become of me (that had lived such an holy life) if I should die in the state of *backsliding* from the good old way?" I always acknowledged that I should be eternally damn'd, were that to be the case. But I must confess that I was not much afraid of dying in such a state, as I was too much prepossessed of the methodistical notions of *free-grace*, that would not let me finally be lost. So that I waited as it were for a *second call* to repentance, justification, &c.

I often privately took the bible to bed with me, and in the long summer mornings I read for hours together in bed. But this did not in the least influence my conduct.

I was twenty-one years of age the 11th of September 1767, the election was over the latter end of March 1768. It was in this year that my new master's wife insisted on my purchasing milk of a milk-maid that was a customer at the shop; which I refused to comply with, as I had a smart little milk-maid of my own. But as my mistress wore the breeches, my master was obliged, by his wife's order, to inform me that I must comply with the commands of my mistress or get another master. I left him without hesitation; and the same afternoon went to Wellington, to take leave of my father and mother, and to inform them of my intention to go to Bristol. I did so, and after two or three days I returned back to Taunton, where I stayed a day or two more. In which time I became enamoured with,

with, or infatuated by the beautiful *Nancy Trott* : and although I saw the impropriety of the measure, yet I could not resist the fair tempter, who prevailed with me to permit her to accompany me in my journey.

“ Reason was given to curb our headstrong will,

“ And yet but shews a weak physician’s skill ;

“ Gives nothing while the raging fit does last,

“ But stays to cure it when the worst is past:

“ Reason’s a staff for age, when Nature’s gone ;

“ But Youth is strong enough to walk alone.”

Dryden’s *Con. of Gran.*

We rested a week in Bridgewater, where I worked and got money to convey us to Exbridge, seventeen miles on this side Bristol ; and there I saw my conduct in such a point of view as made me resolve to leave her.

“ Love’s banquets are extravagantly sweet,

“ And either kill or surfeit all that eat,

“ Who when the sated appetite is tir’d,

“ E’en loath the thoughts of what they once admir’d.”

Pommet.

My finances amounted to three shillings and one penny, out of which I gave her half-a crown,
and

and with the remaining sevenpence, without informing her of my purpose, I set off for Bristol; where I arrived in a few hours, and got work the same evening.

A few days after, I went to the inn where the Taunton carrier put up, to enquire after Miss Trott, as I wanted to know if she had returned safe to Taunton. But I was informed that she was in Bristol nearly as soon as I was, and as I knew but little of the world, and very little of women of her description, I was quite unhappy on her account, for fear that being in a strange place she might be in want and distress; which thought induced me to offer to several of my countrymen, five shillings to the first who should bring me an account where I might find her; but I did not see her until several weeks after that.

The Taunton carrier gave me a letter from my good Mistress Bowdon, (who by marrying again had changed her name to Dingle) The contents of this letter very much surprised

prised me. It informed me that a day or two before I fell out with my last mistress, (which was the trifling cause of my leaving Taunton) Betty Tucker, a common lass, had sworn a child to me; that the parish officers had been to my master's shop, within an hour after I had left it to go to Wellington, and that they had been at Wellington just as I had left that place, and afterwards hearing that I was in Bridgewater they had pursued me there. But the morning on which they arrived there, I had set off for Exbridge; and believing that I had intentionally fled before them, they had given over the chase for the present.

Reflecting on this affair, although my conduct was so far from entitling me to any particular favour from heaven, yet I was then weak enough to imagine that a kind of miracle had been wrought to save me from a prison, or from marrying a woman that I could not bear the idea of living a single week with; and as I had not any knowledge of her being

with

with child (not having seen her for three months before) I had not taken any measure to avoid the consequence, but put myself in the way of the officers: For, as I have just told you, after I had taken leave of my father and mother, I went back to Taunton, and walked about publickly one whole day, and part of another.

This girl was delivered about two months afterwards of a still-born child, so that I was never troubled for expences. Methinks you are ready to say with Pomfret:

“ ’Tis easy to descend into the snare,
 “ By the pernicious conduct of the Fair:
 “ But safely to return from their abode
 “ Requires the wit, the prudence of a God.”

This recalls to my mind a ridiculous affair, which excited much mirth in that part of the country.

During the Election at Taunton, a Gentleman one day came in a post-chaise to the White-hart Inn, kept by Mr. Bowren, and after having refreshed himself, strolled into
 the

the yard, and seeing the hostler, asked him if he could inform him where they took in the *news*? The hostler understanding him in a literal sense, directed him to a Bookseller's shop on the opposite side of the way, this shop was kept by Miss A—d—n, a beautiful young lady of irreproachable character, and one whose fine understanding and polished taste did honour to the profession.

Our gentleman on entering the shop enquired of the shopmaid for her mistress: but the maid being used to serve in the shop, and knowing that her mistress had some ladies with her, informed the gentleman that she could help him to any thing that he wanted. But on his saying he had some private business with her mistress, he was shewed into a back parlour, and the mistress being informed that a gentleman in the back parlour wanted to speak to her, she went directly to him. The moment she entered the room, he clasped her in his arms, called her a divine creature,

creature, &c. This so alarmed Miss A—d—n, that she screamed aloud : on hearing of which the ladies, preceded by the housemaid and shopmaid repaired to the parlour, where they found miss A—d—n almost in fits. The gentleman thinking that it was only a trick to raise her price, took but little notice : on which one of the maids ran out and called in several of the neighbours, who on coming into the parlour, saw with astonishment our Sir Harry Wildair taking improper liberties with Miss A—d—n, and desired him to desist. But he desired them not to attempt to put tricks on travellers, and ordered them to leave the room. Instead of quitting the room, they in a resolute tone ordered our spark to go instantly about his business. However he still kept his ground, until the mayor of the town, who happened to live just by, was called in. Mr. Mayor demanded to know why he took such freedom with the lady ? Our gentleman, seeing that the affair began to look very serious

serious, now became calm, and informed the company that having an inclination for a frolic, he had enquired for a bad house, and had been directed there; and added, that if there had been any mistake, he was very sorry for it, and would beg the lady's pardon. On hearing this, the company was more surprized than before, and demanded of the gentleman, who had informed him that that house was a bawd-house? He replied, The *hostler* at the White Hart. Upon this the hostler was sent for, and on his being asked, if he had directed that gentleman, to miss A—d—n's as to a bawd-house? The poor fellow, with marks of terror and surprise answered, "No. The Gentleman never asked me for a *bawd-house*, he only asked me for a house where they *took in the news*." So that the hostler's understanding him in a literal sense, caused all the confusion. The affair had got so much air that our spark was glad to leave the town immediately.

I am, Dear Friend, yours, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

“ I had a Friend that lov’d me :

“ I was his Soul : he liv’d not but in me.

“ We were so close link’d in each other’s breast,

“ The rivets were not found that join’d us first.

Dryden’s *All for Love*

Dear Friend,

I TOOK a lodging in a street, called (I think) Castle-ditch, at the house of a Mr. *James* ; a much genteeler residence, than commonly falls to the lot of Journeymen Shoemakers.

In this house I found a Mr. John Jones, a genteel young man, just turned of twenty-one years of age : He was also a son of *Crispin*, and made women’s stuff shoes ; which he sold by the dozen to warehouses. This Mr. Jones and I were soon very intimate ; we

G

kept

kept ourselves decently dressed, and in general worked hard, spending our money chiefly in the company of women. As,

“ All men have follies, which they blindly trace,
 “ Thro’ the dark turnings of a dubious maze.
 “ But happy those, who by a prudent care,
 “ Retreat betimes from the fallacious snare.”

Pomfret.

We followed this course about four months. During this time Mr. Jones once persuaded me to go with him to the Playhouse, where we saw Shakespear’s fine comedy of “ As you like it.” This was a feast indeed to me, who had never before seen nor read any theatrical production. Words are inadequate to describe my sensations on the occasion. Between the play and the entertainment, (which was the Mayor of Garrat) Mr. Edward Shuter performed a short piece called, “ The Drunken Man.” This was the only time that I ever saw that extraordinary genius, but he made such an impression on my mind, that ’tis impossible I should ever forget him.

About

It is singular enough, that about this time, although I could not write, yet I composed several songs, one of which was sold for a guinea, some were given to the Bristol Printers, who printed them, and the ballad-singers sung them about the streets; on which occasions I was as proud as though I had composed an opera. My friend Mr. Jones was my secretary, who before I came to live with him had not the least relish for books, and I had only read a few enthusiastic authors, and Pomfret's poems; this last I could almost repeat by memory; however I made the most of my little stock of literature, and strongly recommended the purchasing of books to Mr. Jones. But so ignorant were we on the subject, that neither of us knew what books were fit for our perusal, nor what to enquire for, as we had scarce ever heard or seen even any *title-pages*, except a few of the religious sort, which at that time we had no relish for. So that we were at a loss how to increase our

small stock of science. And here I cannot help thinking, that had fortune thrown proper books into our way, we should soon have acquired a just taste for literature, and have made some tolerable progress, but such was our obscurity, that it was next to impossible for us ever to emerge from it.

As we could not tell what to ask for, we were ashamed to go into the booksellers shops, and I assure you, my friend, that there are thousands now in England in the very same situation; many, very many have come to my shop, who have discovered an enquiring mind, but have been totally at a loss what to ask for, having no friend to direct them.

“ ————— Reason grows apace, and calls
 “ For the kind hand of assiduous care.
 “ Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
 “ To teach the young idea how to shoot,
 “ To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,
 “ To breath the enlivening spirit, and to fix
 “ The glorious purpose in the glowing breast.”

Thomson.

One

One day as my friend Jones and I were strolling about the fair that is annually held in and near St. James's church-yard, we saw a stall of books, and in looking over the title pages, I met with Hobbes's Translation of Homer. I had some how or other heard that Homer was a great Poet, but unfortunately I had never heard of Pope's translation of him, so we very eagerly purchased that by Hobbes. At this stall I also purchased Walker's Poetical paraphrase of Epictetus's morals; and home we went, perfectly well pleased with our bargains.

We that evening began with Hobbes's Homer; but found it very difficult for us to read, owing to the obscurity of the translation, which together with the indifferent language, and the want of poetical merit in the translator somewhat disappointed us: however we had from time to time many a hard puzzling hour with him.

But as to Walker's Epictetus, although it

had not much poetical merit, yet it was very easy to be read, and as easily understood ; and the principles of the *Stoic* charmed me so much, that I made the book my companion wherever I went, and read it over and over in raptures, thinking that my mind was secured against all the smiles or frowns of fortune.

I now began to think of employing my spare hours in something more satisfactory ; and for want of something to do, I went one evening to hear Mr. John Wesley preach in Broad-mead, and as I was compleatly tired of the dissipated way of life I had lived (more or less) ever since I had been out of my apprenticeship, and as I happened to have no other pursuit or hobby horse, there was a kind of vacuity in my mind : In this state I was very susceptible of any impressions, so that when I came to hear Mr. Wesley, my old fanatical notions returned full upon me, and I was once more carried away by the tide of enthusiasm.

My

My friend Mr. Jones soon saw with grief and indignation the wonderful alteration in me, who from a gay, volatile, dissipated young fellow, was at once metamorphosed into a dull, moping, praying, psalm-singing fanatic, continually reprehending all about me for their harmless mirth and gaiety.

“For Saints themselves will often be,

“Of Gifts that cost them nothing, free.”

Hudibras

Nothing is more common than to see mankind run from one extreme to another: which was my case once more.

About this time we left our habitation in Castle-ditch, and took lodgings of Mr. Jones's mother, on St. Philips Plain, where lived a Brother of Mr. Jones, who was about seventeen years of age. Soon after we had removed to this place, the Brother, whose name was Richard Jones, was permitted to work in the same room with my friend and me. They had also a sister about twenty years of age,

who frequently joined our company.

[Our room overlooked the Church-yard, which contributed to increase my gloomy ideas, and I had so much of the spiritual quixotism in me, that I soon began to think that it was not enough for me to save my own Soul, but I ought in conscience to attempt the conversion of my companions, who (I really believed) were in the high road to Hell, and every moment liable to eternal damnation. And of this charitable disposition are almost all the methodists, who, as Hudibras says,

“Compound for sins they are inclin’d to

“By damning those they have no mind to.”

The frequency of newly-opened graves, which we saw from our windows, furnished me with opportunities for descanting on the uncertainty of life and all sublunary enjoyments, I assured them that nothing deserved our attention but what related to our everlasting state; and that they might, on their repentance, receive in one moment the pardon of all their
sins

sins, have a foretaste of the joys of Heaven, and know their names were enrolled in the book of life. I farther protested that they had no time to lose; and they all stood on the very verge of hell, and the breaking-brink of eternal torments; and a great deal more of such edifying stuff.

The youngest brother soon became a convert; and Miss Betsey was *born again* soon after. But I had a tight job to convert my friend John; he held out, and often cursed me heartily, and sung profane songs all day long.

But about four or five weeks' after my re-conversion, John was also converted, and became a favourite of heaven, so that we considered ourselves as a holy community.

“ Who knew the seat of Paradise,
 “ Could tell in what degree it lies;
 “ Could deepest mysteries unriddle,
 “ As easily as thread a needle.”

Hudibras.

I am dear Friend, yours,

LET-

 L E T T E R XII.

“ ——— He was a shrewd philosopher,
 “ And had read every text and gloss over ;
 “ Whate’er the crabbed’st author hath,
 “ He understood b’ the implicit faith ;
 “ Whatever Sceptic could enquire for,
 “ For every why he had a wherefore ;
 “ Knew more than forty of them do,
 “ As far as words and terms could go,
 “ All which he understood by rote,
 “ And as occasion serv’d would quote ;
 “ No matter whether right or wrong,
 “ They might be either said or sung.”

Hudibras.

Dear Friend,

MR. John Jones and myself were now
 greater friends than ever, so that one
 would on no account stir out of the house
 without the other.

Mr. Jones had the advantage of me in tem-
 porals, he could get more money than I could.

But

But as to grace and spiritual gifts, I had much the advantage of all our community ; so that I was their spiritual director, and if they thought that any of their acquaintance held any opinions that were not quite sound and orthodox, such were introduced to me, in order that I might convince them of their errors. In fact I looked upon myself as an apostle, so that whatever I asserted was received as pure gospel ; nor was any thing undertaken without my advice.

We all worked very hard, particularly Mr. John Jones and me, in order to get money to purchase books ; and for some months every shilling we could spare was laid out at old book-shops, stalls, &c. infomuch that in a short time we had what *we* called a very good library. This choice collection consisted of Polhil on precious Faith ; Polhil on the Decrees ; Shepherd's sound Believer ; Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress ; Bunyan's Good News for the vilest of Sinners ; Bunyan's Heavenly Foot-

Footman; his Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners; his Life and Death of Mr. *Badman*; his Holy War in the town of *Manfoul*; Hervey's Meditations; Hervey's Dialogues; Rogers's Seven Helps to Heaven; Hall's Jacob's Ladder; Divine Breathings of a devout Soul; Adams on the second epistle of Peter; Adams's Sermon on the *black* Devil, the *white* Devil, &c. &c. Collings's Divine Cordial for the Soul; Pearse's Soul's Espousal to Christ; Erskine's Gospel Sonnets; The Death of Abel; The Faith of God's Elect; Manton on the epistle of St. James; Pample's Works; Baxter's Shove for a *heavy-arsed* Christian; his Call to the Unconverted; Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears; Mrs. Moore's Evidences for Heaven; Mead's Almost a Christian; The Three Steps to Heaven; Brooks on Assurance; God's Revenge against Murder; Heaven upon Earth; The Pathway to Heaven; Wilcox's Guide to eternal Glory; Derham's Unsearchable Riches of Christ; his Exposition of
Rev-

Revelations ; Alleine's Sure guide to Heaven ; The Sincere Convert ; Watfon's Heaven taken by Storm ; Heaven's Vengeance ; Wall's None but Christ ; Aristotle's Masterpiece ; Coles on God's Sovereignty ; Charnock on Providence ; Young's Short and sure Guide to Salvation ; Wesley's Sermons, Journals, Tracts, &c. and others of the same description.

We had indeed a few of a better sort, as Gay's Fables ; Pomfret's Poems ; Milton's Paradise Lost ; besides Hobbes's Homer, and Walker's Epictetus, mentioned in my former letter.

But what we wanted in judgment in choosing our library, we made up in application ; and so anxious were we to read a great deal, that we allowed ourselves but about three hours sleep in twenty-four, and for some months together we never were all in bed at the same time, (Sunday nights excepted). But lest we should oversleep the time allowed, one of
us

us sat up to work until the time appointed for the others to rise, and when all were up, my friend John, and your humble servant, took it by turns to read aloud to the rest, while they were at their work.

But this mad scheme of ours had like to have been attended with very serious consequences. One night it being my turn to watch; I removed to the fire-side, to read some particular passage, and the candlestick which we worked by not being convenient to move about, and there being no other at that time in the room, I set up the candle against the handle of a pewter pot, and was so extremely heavy (owing to much watchfulness) that I fell fast asleep and had liked never to have awaked again; for the candle burned down to the handle of the pot, melted it off, and then fell on the chair on which it stood; so that Mr. Jones found me in the morning, fast asleep, and part of the chair consumed;

consumed ; which alarmed us all very much, and made us more cautious.

But still we continued our plan of living, so that we made a rapid progress in what we called spiritual and divine knowledge ; and were soon masters of the various arguments made use of by most polemical divines, &c.

The better to guard my pupils from what I called *false doctrines*, I used often to engage them in various controversies in which I sometimes took one side of the question, some times the other, in order to make them well versed in controversy, and acquainted with the strength of their adversaries. So that I was by turns, a Calvinist, an Arminian, an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, and even an Atheist. And after they had said all they could to confute me, I would point out where they had failed, adding such arguments as I was master of, and in general we were all satisfied. But when we happened to have any doubts, we had recourse

course to the Bible and commentators of our own side of the question ; and I assure you, my dear friend, this was a very fine hobby-horse, which like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up all the other hobby-horses,

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET

LETTER XIII.

“Laugh where you must ; be candid where you can.”

Pope.

Dear Friend,

IN the course of my reading, I learnt that there had been sects of Philosophers amongst the Greeks, Romans, &c. and I well remembered the names of the most eminent of them. At an old Book-shop I purchased Plato on the Immortality of the Soul, Plutarch's Morals, the Morals of Confucius the Chinese Philosopher, and a few others. I now can scarce help thinking that I received more real benefit from reading and studying them and Epictetus than from all other Books that I had read before, or have read since that time.

I was but about twenty-two years of age, when I first began to read them, and I assure

H

you

you, my friend, that they made a very deep and lasting impresson on my mind. By reading them I was taught to bear the unavoidable evils attending humanity, and to supply all my wants by contracting or restraining my desires.

It is now twenty-three years since I first read them; during which time I do not recollect that I have ever felt one *anxious* painful wish to get money, estates, or any way to better my condition: and yet I have never since that time let slip any fair opportunity of doing it. So that all I mean is that I have not been *over solicitous* to obtain any thing that I did not possess; but could at all times say, with St. Paul, that I have learned to be contented in all situations, although at times they have been very gloomy indeed. Dryden says,

“We to ourselves may all our wishes grant,

“For nothing coveting, we nothing want.”

Dryden's Indian Emperor

And in another place he says,

“They cannot want who wish not to have more;

“Who ever said an anchorit was poor?”

Dryden's Secret Love.

The

The pleasures of eating and drinking I entirely despised, and for some time carried this disposition to an extreme. The account of Epicurus living in his garden, at the expence of about a halfpenny per day, and that when he added a little cheese to his bread on particular occasions, he considered it as a luxury, filled me with raptures. From that moment I began to live on bread and tea, and for a considerable time did not partake of any other viand, but in that I indulged myself three or four times a day. My reasons for living in this abstemious manner were in order to save money to purchase Books, to wean myself from the gross pleasures of eating, drinking, &c. and to purge my mind, and make it more susceptible of intellectual pleasures. And here I cannot help remarking, that the term *Epicure* when applied to one that makes the pleasures of the table his chief good, casts an unjust reflection on *Epicurus*, and conveys a wrong idea of that contemplative and very

abstemious philosopher : for although he asserted that pleasure was the chief or supreme good, yet he also as strongly asserted, that it was the tranquillity of the mind, and intellectual pleasure, that he so extolled and recommended.

“ Some place the bliss in action, some in ease :

“ Those call it pleasure, and contentment these :

“ Some, sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain ;

“ Some swell’d to Gods, confess even virtue vain.”

Pope.

I continued the above self-denying life, until I left Bristol, which was on Whitsunday in 1769. I had for some time before been pointing out to my friend John Jones some of the pleasures and advantages of travelling, so that I easily prevailed on him to accompany me towards the west of England ; and in the evening we arrived at Bridgewater, where Mr. Jones got work. He was employed by Mr. Cash, with whom he continued near twelve months, and in the end married Mr. Cash’s daughter, a very pretty and very amiable little woman

woman, with some fortune. When my friend was offered work by Mr. Cash I prevailed on him to accept of it, by assuring him that I had no doubt of my being able to get work at Taunton. But in that I was disappointed, nor could I get a constant seat of work until I came to Exeter, and of that place I was soon tired ; but being informed that a Mr. John Taylor of Kingsbridge (forty miles below Exeter) wanted such a hand, I went down and was gladly received by Mr. Taylor, whose name inspires me with gratitude, as he never treated me as a servant, but made me his companion ; Nor was any part of my time ever spent in a more agreeable pleasing manner than that which I passed in this retired place, or I believe more profitable to a master ; I was the first man he ever had that was able to make Stuff and Silk Shoes, and it being also known that I came from Bristol, this had great weight with the country ladies, and procured my master customers, who generally

sent for me to take measure of their feet, and I was looked upon by all to be the best workman in the Town, altho' I had not been brought up to Stuff-work, nor had ever entirely made one Stuff of Silk Shoe before. Neither should I have presumed to proclaim myself a Stuff-man, had there been any such workmen in the place; but as there were none, I boldly ventured, and succeeded very well; nor did any one in the town ever know that it was my first attempt in that branch.

During the time that I lived here, I as usual was obliged to employ one or another of my acquaintance to write my letters for me; this procured me much praise among the young men as a good inditer of letters; (I need not inform you that they were not good judges) My master said to me one day, he was surprized that I did not learn to write my own letters, and added, that he was sure that I could learn to do it in a very short time. The thought pleased me much. Without any
delay

delay I set about it, by taking up pieces of paper that had any writing on them, and imitating the letters as well as I could. I employed my leisure hours in this way for near two months, after which time I wrote my own letters, in a bad hand, you may be sure ; but it was plain and easy to read, which was all I cared for : nor to the present moment can I write much better, as I never would have any person to teach me, nor was I ever possessed of patience enough to employ time sufficient to learn to write well ; and yet as soon as I was able to scribble, I wrote verses on some trifle or other every day for years together.

But I always wrote as fast as I could, without endeavouring to write well, and that this is my present practice I need not inform you.

I came to this place in but a weak state of body, however the healthy situation of the town, together with bathing in the salt water, soon restored me to perfect health. I passed thirteen months here in a very happy manner ;

but the wages for work being very low, and as I had spent much time in writing hymns to every song-tune that I knew, besides a number of love-verses, letters, &c. I was very poor; and to complete all, I began to keep a deal of company, in which I gave a loose to my natural gaiety of disposition, much more than was consistent with the grave, sedate ideas which I had formed of a religious character, all which made me resolve to leave Kingsbridge, which I did in 1770.

I travelled as far as Exeter the first day, where I worked about a fortnight, and saved sufficient to carry me to Bridgewater, where I worked two or three weeks more. Before I arrived there Mr. John Jones had gone back to reside at Bristol, but as soon as he heard of my being in Bridgewater, he and his brother Richard sent me an invitation to come to Bristol again and live with them. But finding that I did not immediately comply, they both came to Bridgewater to me, and
declared

declared their intentions of not returning to Bristol without me ; so that after a day or two I yielded to their sollicitations, and again lived very comfortably with them, their mother and sister.

I think it was about this period, that I went several times to the Tabernacle, and heard Mr. George Whitefield ; and of all the preachers that ever I attended, never did I meet with one that had such a perfect command of the passions of his audience. In every sermon that I heard him preach, he would sometimes make them ready to burst with laughter, and the next moment drown them in tears ; indeed it was scarce possible for the most guarded to escape the effect. I am,

Dear Friend, your's, &c.

LET.

 LETTER XIV.

“ Ah ! I remember well, and how can I
 “ But evermore remember well, when first
 “ Our flame begun ? when scarce we knew what was
 “ The flame we felt ; when as we sat and sigh’d,
 “ And looked upon each other, and conceiv’d
 “ Not what we ail’d, yet something we did ail,
 “ And yet were well : and yet we were not well :
 “ And what was our disease we could not tell :
 “ Then would we kiss, then sigh and look.”

Daniel’s Hymen’s Triumph.

Dear Friend,

I MUST now request you to go back with
 me a few years, as I have not yet made
 you acquainted with my amours. I was about
 seventeen years of age when an adventure dis-
 covered, that altho’ I was so very spiritual, as
 I before informed you, yet still I was suscep-
 tible of another kind of impresson. For be-
 ing at farmer Gamlin’s at Charlton, four miles
 from Taunton, to hear a methodist sermon,

I

I fell desperately in love with the farmer's handsome dairy-maid.

“ Her home-spun dress in simple neatness lies,

“ And for no glaring equipage she sighs

“ She gratefully receives what heaven has sent,

“ And, rich in poverty, enjoys content.

“ Her reputation, which is all her boast,

“ In a malicious visit ne'er was lost.

“ No midnight masquerade her beauty wears,

“ And health, not paint, the fading bloom repairs.

“ If Love's soft passions in her bosom reign,

“ An equal passion warms her happy swain.”

Gay.

At that time I abounded in spiritual gifts, which induced this honest rustic maid to be very kind to me, and to walk several fields with me in my road back to Taunton, talking all the way of her spiritual distress and godly concerns; while I poured heavenly comfort into her soul, and talked so long of *divine* Love, until I found that my affection for her was not altogether of that *spiritual* nature. And yet,

“ We

“ We lov’d without transgressing Virtue’s bounds ;
 “ We fix’d the limits of our tenderest thoughts,
 “ Came to the verge of honour, and there stopp’d ;
 “ We warm’d us by the fire, but were not scorch’d.
 “ If this be sin, Angels might live with more ;
 “ And mingle rays of minds less pure than ours.”

Dryden’s Love Triumphant.

After this you may be sure that I did not
 let slip any opportunity of hearing sermons
 at farmer Gamlin’s ; and I generally prevailed
 with Nancy Smith, my charming spiritual
 dairy maid, to accompany me part of the way
 home, and at every gate I ratified my spiri-
 tual advice with a kiss.

—“ Oh then the longest summer’s day
 “ Seem’d too too much in haste ; still the full heart
 “ Had not imparted half : ’twas happiness
 “ Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed
 “ Never to return, how painful the remembrance !

Blair’s Grave.

But alas ! these comfortable Sunday walks
 were soon at an end ; as my charming Nancy
 Smith, for some reason or other (I have for-
 got what) left her place, and went to live as
 dairy-

dairy-maid with a farmer in the marsh country, between Bridgewater and Bristol, seventeen miles from Taunton. So that I did not see her for near two years afterwards; during which time I gave advice to another holy sister, whose name was Hannah Allen.

I prevailed on this lovely maid to attend the methodist preaching at five o'clock on Monday mornings, and we often met at three or four; so that we had an hour or two to spend in walking and conversation on spiritual affairs: and had you seen and heard us on the cold frosty mornings, it would have put you in mind of Milton's *Devils*, whom he represents as at times starving with cold:

“ Others apart, sat on a hill, retir'd,
 “ In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
 “ Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
 “ Fix'd fate, free-will; foreknowledge absolute;
 “ And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

Paradise Lost.

But I assure you, my friend, that we were sometimes like the Galatians of old; we
 began

began in the *spirit*, and ended in the *flesh*.

With this dear girl I spent all my leisure time, for two or three years: so that we enjoyed together hundreds of happy innocent hours.

“My Time, O ye Muses, was happily spent,

“When *Hannah* went with me wherever I went.”

But still I never could entirely forget my charming innocent *Dairy-maid*. The truth is, I had Love enough for both, to have taken either *for better for worse*; but my being an apprentice, prevented me from marrying either.

’Tis true I had the greatest love for Nancy Smith. But Hannah Allen had the advantage of Nancy, as I could see Hannah almost every day, and Nancy only once or twice in about three years. However I at last fell out with Hannah, (on what occasion I cannot recollect) and I sent Nancy a letter, which made up matters with her: soon after that she came to live for a little time at her father’s

father's house at Petherton near Bridgewater, seven miles from Taunton. This happened during the election at Taunton, when I was changed from a strict methodist to a rake ; so that although we were to have been married in a few days, yet the marriage was put off on account of my dissipated character, and I soon after set off for Bristol, as I before informed you : nor did I see her after that, until my return from Kingsbridge, when I saw her several times prior to my setting off for Bristol, with my friend John Jones, and his brother Richard.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XV.

“ The man who by his labour gets
 “ His bread in independent state,
 “ Who never begs, and seldom eats,
 “ Himself can fix, or change his fate.”

Prior.

Dear Friend,

I HAD not long resided a second time with my good Bristol friends, before I renewed my correspondence with my old sweetheart Nancy Smith. I informed her that my attachment to Books, together with travelling from place to place, and also my total disregard for money had prevented me from saving any ; and that while I remained in a single unfettled state, I was never likely to accumulate it. I also pressed her very much to come to Bristol to be married, which she very soon complied with : and married we were, at St.

Peter's

Peter's Church, towards the end of the year 1770 ; near seven years after my first making love to her.

" When join'd in hand and heart, to church we went,
 " Mutual in vows, and prisoners by consent.
 " My Nancy's heart beat high, with mix'd alarms,
 " But trembling beauty glow'd with double charms.
 " In her soft breast a modest struggle rose,
 " How she should seem to like the lot she chose :
 " A smile, she thought would dress her looks too gay :
 " A frown might seem too sad, and blast the day.
 " But while nor this, nor that, her will could bow,
 " She walk'd, and look'd, and charm'd, and knew not how.
 " Our hands at length th' unchanging Fiat bound,
 " And our glad Souls sprung out to meet the sound.
 " Joys meeting Joys unite, and stronger shine :
 " For passion purified is half divine :
 " Now NANCY thou art mine. I cry'd—and she
 " Sigh'd soft—NOW JEMMY thou art LORD of me !"

A. Hill

We kept our wedding at the house of my friends the Messrs Jones's, and at bed-time retired to ready-furnished lodgings, which we had before provided, at half-a-crown per week. Our finances were but just sufficient to pay the expences of the day, for in search-

I

ing

ing our pockets (which we did not do in a careless manner) we discovered that we had but one halfpenny to begin the world with. 'Tis true we had laid in eatables sufficient for a day or two, in which time we knew we could by our work procure more, which we very cheerfully set about, singing together the following strains of Dr. Cotton.

“ Our portion is not large indeed,
 “ But then how little do we need ?
 “ For Nature's calls are few,
 “ In this the art of living lies,
 “ To want no more than may suffice,
 “ And make that little do.”

The above, and the following ode by Mr. Samuel Wesley, did we scores of times repeat, even with raptures !

“ No glory I covet, no riches I want,
 “ Ambition is nothing to me :
 “ The one thing I beg of kind heaven to grant
 “ Is a mind independant and free.
 “ By passion unruffled, untainted by pride,
 “ By Reason my life let me square :
 “ The wants of my nature are cheaply supplied,
 “ And the rest are but folly and care.

Those

“ Those bleffings which providence kindly has lent,
 “ I’ll juftly and gratefully prize;
 “ While fweet meditation and cheerful content,
 “ Shall make me both healthy and wife.

“ How vainly through infinite trouble and ftife,
 “ The many their labours employ;
 “ When all that is truly delightful in Life,
 “ Is what all, if they will, may enjoy.”

After having worked on ftuff-work in the country, I could not bear the idea of returning to the leather branch; fo that I attempted and obtained a feat of Stuff in Bristol. But better work being required there than in Kingsbridge, &c. I was obliged to take fo much care to please my mafter, that at firft I could not get more than nine fhillings a week, and my wife could get but very little, as fhe was learning to bind ftuff-shoes, and had never been much ufed to her needle; fo that what with the expence of ready-furnished lodging, fire, candles, &c. we had but little left for purchafing provifions.

To increase our straits, my old friend being somewhat displeased at our leaving him and his relations, took an early opportunity to tell me that I was indebted to him near forty shillings, of two years standing. I was not convinced of the justice of the claim, but to avoid dispute, I paid him in about two months, during nearly the whole of which time it was extremely severe weather, and yet we made four shillings and sixpence per week pay for the whole of what we consumed in eating and drinking. Strong beer we had none, nor any other liquor, (the pure element excepted) and instead of tea, or rather coffee, we toasted a piece of bread; at other times we fried some wheat, which when boiled in water made a tolerable substitute for coffee; and as to animal food, we made use of but little, and that little we boiled and made broth of.

During the whole of this time we never once wished for any thing that we had not got,
but

but were quite contented, and with a good grace, in reality made a virtue of necessity. We

“ Trembled not with vain desires,

“ Few the things which life requires.”

Francis's Horace.

I am, dear friend,

Your's, &c,

L E T T E R XVI.

“In adverse hours an equal mind maintain.”

Francis's Horace.

Dear Friend,

IN a few days after we had paid the last five shillings of the debt claimed by my friend Mr. Jones, we were both together taken so ill as to be confined to our bed, but the good woman of the house, our Landlady, came to our room and did a few trifles for us. She seemed very much alarmed at our situation, or rather for her own, I suppose, as thinking we might in some measure become burthensome to her. We had in cash two shillings and nine-pence, half a crown of which we had carefully locked up in a box, to be saved for a resource on any extraordinary emergency

gence. This money supported us two or three days, in which time I recovered without the help of medicine: but my wife continued ill near six months, and was confined to her bed the greatest part of the time; which illness may very easily be accounted for.

Before she came to Bristol, she had ever been used to a very active life, and had always lived in the country, so that in coming to dwell in a populous city, she had exchanged much exercise and good air for a sedentary life and very bad air; and this I presume was the cause of all her illness from time to time, which at length, as unfortunately as effectually undermined her constitution. During her first six months illness, I lived many days solely on water-gruel; for as I could not afford to pay a nurse, much of my time was taken up in attendance on her, and most of my money expended in procuring medicines, together with such trifles as she could eat and drink. But what added extremely to my ca-

lamity was the being within the hearing of her groans, which were caused by the excruciating pains in her head, which for months together defied the power of medicine.

It is impossible for words to describe the keenness of my sensations during this long term; yet as to *myself*, my poverty and being obliged to live upon water-gruel gave me not the least uneasiness.

“ In ruffling seasons I was calm,

“ And smil’d when fortune frown’d.”

Young.

But the necessity of being continually in the sight and hearing of a beloved object, a young, charming, handsome, innocent wife,

“ Who sick in bed lay gasping for her breath;

“ Her eyes, like dying lamps sunk in their sockets

“ Now glar’d, and now drew back their feeble light:

“ Faintly her speech fell from her faltering tongue

“ In interrupted accents, as she strove

“ With strong agonies that shook her limbs

“ And writh’d her tortur’d features into forms

“ Hideous to sight.”

Beller’s Injur’d Innocence.

How I supported this long, dreary scene, I
know

know not ; the bare recollection of which is painful, even at this distance of time. At last, when every thing that seemed to promise relief had been tried in vain, some old woman recommended *Cephalic* snuff. I own I had not much faith in it ; however I procured it, and in a short time after she was much relieved from the intolerable pain in her head, but yet continued in a very bad state of health ; her constitution having suffered such a dreadful shock, I thought that no means could be used so likely to restore it, as a removal to her native air. Accordingly I left my seat of work at Bristol, and returned with her to Taunton, which is about seven miles from Petherton, her native place. But in Taunton I could not procure so much work as I could do ; so that as soon as I thought she could bear the air of Bristol, we returned thither, where she soon relapsed, and we again went back to Taunton. This removing to Taunton was repeated about five times in little more than three years.

But

But at last, finding that she had long fits of illness at Taunton also, as well as at Bristol, with a view of having a better price for my work I resolved to visit London; and as I had not money sufficient to bear the expences of both to town, I left her all the money I could spare, and took a place on the outside of the stage coach, and the second day arrived in the metropolis, in August 1774, with two shillings and sixpence in my pocket; and recollecting the address of an old townsman, who was also a spiritual brother,

“ Whose hair in greasy locks hung down,

“ As strait as candles from his crown,

“ To shade the borders of his face,

“ Whose outward signs of inward grace,

“ Were only visible in spiteful

“ Grimaces, very stern and frightful.

Butler's Posth. Works.

This holy Brother was also a journeyman shoe-maker, who had arrived at the summit of his expectations, being able to keep an house over his head (as he chose to express himself :)

himself;) that is, by letting nearly the whole of it out in lodgings, he was enabled to pay the rent. This house was in White-cross-street, which I found out the morning after my arrival, where I procured a lodging, and Mr. Heath, in Fore-street, supplied me with plenty of work.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

“When superstition (bane of manly virtues!)

“Strikes root within the soul; it over runs

“And kills the power of Reason.”

Philips of Gloucester.

Dear Friend,

AT this time I was as visionary and superstitious as ever I had been at any preceding period, for although I had read some sensible Books, and had thereby acquired a few rational ideas, yet having had a methodistical wife for near four years, and my keeping methodistical company, together with the gloomy notions which in spite of reason and philosophy I had imbibed during the frequent, long and indeed almost constant illness of my wife, the consequence was, that those few rational or liberal ideas which I had before treasured

fired up, were at my coming to London in a dormant state, or borne down by the torrent of enthusiastic whims, and fanatical chimeras.

“ ——— Oh ! what a reasonless machine

“ Can superstition make the reas’ner man !”

Miller’s Mahomet.

So that as soon as I procured a lodging and work, my next enquiry was for Mr. Wesley’s *Gospel shops*: and on producing my *class* and *band* tickets from Taunton, I was put into a class, and a week or two after admitted into a band.

But it was several weeks before I could firmly resolve to continue in London; as I really was struck with horror for the fate of it; more particularly on Sundays, as I found so few went to church, and so many were walking and riding about for pleasure, and the lower class getting drunk, quarrelling, fighting, working, buying, selling, &c. I had seen so much of the same kind in Bristol, that I often wondered how God permitted it to stand

stand: But London was so much worse, that I seriously trembled for fear the measure of iniquity was quite full, and that every hour would be its last. However I at length concluded, that if London was a second *Sodom*, I was a second *Lot*; and these comfortable ideas reconciled me to the thought of living in it. Besides, some of Mr. Wesley's people gave me great comfort by assuring me, that "the Lord had much people in this city:" which I soon discovered to be true, as I got acquainted with many

"Errant saints, whom all men grant

"To be the true church militant."

In a month I saved money sufficient to bring up my wife, and she had a pretty tolerable state of health; of my master I obtained some Stuff-shoes for her to bind, and nearly as much as she could do, and as we had plenty of work and higher wages, we were tolerably easy in our circumstances, more so than we ever had been, so that we soon procured a few cloaths.

My

My wife had all her life before done very well with a superfine broad cloth cloak, but now I prevailed on her to have one of silk.

Until this winter I had never found out that I wanted a *great coat*, but now I made that important discovery; and my landlord shewed me one made of a coarse kind of Bath coating, which he purchased new at a shop in Rosemary-lane, for ten shillings; so that the next half guinea I had to spare, away I went to Rosemary-lane, (and to my great surprise) was hauled into a shop by a fellow that was walking up and down before the door of a fop-seller, where I was soon fitted with a great coat of the same sort as that of my Landlord. I asked the price; but how great was my astonishment, when the honest fop-man told me, that he was so taken with my honest industrious looks, that he would let me have it cheaper than he would his own brother, so in one word he would oblige *me* with it for five and twenty shillings, which
was

was the very money that it cost him. On hearing this, I crossed the shop in a trice, in order to set off home again, but the door had a fastening to it beyond my comprehension, nor would the good man let me out before I had made him an offer. I told him, I had so little money about me that I could not offer any thing, and again desired that he would let me out. But he persisted, and at last I told him that my landlord had informed me that he had purchased such another coat for ten shillings; on which he began to give himself airs, and assured me that however some people came by their goods, that for his part, he always paid for his. I heartily wished myself out of the shop, but in vain; as he seemed determined not to part with me until I had made some offer. I then told him that I had but ten shillings and sixpence, and of course could not offer him any more than I had got. I now expected more abuse from him, but instead of that the patient good man told me, that as he
perhaps

perhaps might get something by me another time, I should have the coat for my half guinea, although it was worth more than double the money.

About the end of November I received an account of the death of my grandfather; and was also informed that he had left a will in favour of my Grandmother-in-law's relations, who became possessed of all his effects, except a small freehold estate, which he left to my youngest brother, because he happened to be called George, (which was the name of my Grandfather) and ten pounds a piece to each of his grand-children.

So totally unacquainted was I with the modes of transacting business, that I could not point out any method of having my ten pounds sent up to London to me, at least no mode that the executor of the will would approve of; it being such a *prodigious* sum, that the greatest caution was used on both sides, so that it cost me about half the money in going

K down

down for it, and in returning to town again. This was in extremely hard frosty weather (I think sometime in December), and being on the outside of a stage-coach, I was so very cold, that when I came to the inn where the passengers dined, I went directly to the fire, which struck the cold inward, so that I had but a very narrow escape from death. This happened in going down. In returning back to town, I had other misfortunes. The cold weather still continuing, I thought the basket warmer than the roof, and about six miles from Salisbury, I went back into the basket. But on getting out of it, in the Inn yard at Salisbury, I heard some money jingle, and on searching my pockets, I discovered that I had lost about sixteen shillings, two or three of which I found in the basket, the rest had fallen through on the road; and no doubt the whole of what I had left of my ten pounds would have gone the same way, had I not (for fear of highwaymen) sewed it up in my cloaths.

cloaths. The loss of my silver I bore with the temper of a stoic, and like Epictetus reasoned, that I could not have lost it, if I had not at first had it; and that as I had lost it, why it was all the same as though it had not been given to me at all.

But a more dreadful misfortune befel me the next morning; the extreme severe weather still continuing, in order to keep me from dying with cold, I drank some purl and gin, which (not being used to drink any thing strong) made me so drunk, that the coachman put me inside the carriage for fear I should fall off the roof. I there met with some of the jovial sort, who had also drank to keep out the cold, so that I found them in high glee; being asked to sing them a song, I immediately complied, and forgot that I was one of the holy brethren, so that I sung song for song with the merriest of them; only several times between the acts, I turned up the whites of my eyes, and uttered a few ejaculations,

tions, as “Lord forgive me!” “O Christ! What am I doing?” and a few more of the same pious sort. However, after eating a good dinner, and refraining from liquor, I became nearly sober, and by the time I arrived in town quite so; though in a terrible agitation of mind, by reflecting on what I had done, and was so ashamed of the affair, that I concealed it from my wife, that I might not grieve her righteous soul with the knowledge of so dreadful a fall: so that she with great pleasure ripped open the places in my cloaths, which contained my treasure, and with an heart full of gratitude, piously thanked Providence for affording us such a supply, and hoped that the Lord would enable us to make a good use of it.

I am,

Dear Friend, your's, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XVIII.

“ Now since through all the race of man we find,
 “ Each to some darling passion is inclin’d,
 “ Let Books be still the bias of my mind.”

Anonym.

Dear Friend,

WITH the remainder of the money we purchased household goods, but as we then had not sufficient to furnish a room, we worked hard, and lived hard, so that in a short time we had a room furnished with our own goods; and I believe that it is not possible for you to imagine with what pleasure and satisfaction we looked round the room and surveyed our property: I believe that Alexander the Great never reflected on his immense acquisitions with half the heart-felt enjoyment which we experienced on this capital attainment.

After our room was furnished, as we still enjoyed a better state of health than we did at Bristol and Taunton, and had also more

work and higher wages, we often added something or other to our stock of wearing apparel. Nor did I forget the old book-shops : but frequently added an old book to my small collection, and I really have often purchased books with the money that should have been expended in purchasing something to eat, an instance of which follows :

At the time we were purchasing household goods, we kept ourselves very short of money, and on Christmas-eve we had but half-a-crown left to buy a Christmas dinner. My wife desired that I would go to market, and purchase this festival dinner, and off I set for that purpose ; but in the way I saw an old book-shop, and I could not resist the temptation of going in ; intending only to expend sixpence or ninepence out of my half-crown. But I stumbled upon Young's Night Thoughts—down went my half-crown—and I hastened home, vastly delighted with the acquisition. When my wife asked me where was our Christmas dinner ?

dinner? I told her it was in my pocket.—
 “In your pocket! (said she) that is a strange place. How could you think of stuffing a joint of meat into your pocket?” I assured her that it would take no harm. But as I was in no haste to take it out, she began to be more particular, and enquired what I had got, &c. On which I began to harangue on the superiority of intellectual pleasures over sensual gratifications, and observed that the brute creation enjoyed the latter in a much higher degree than man——

I was proceeding in this strain: “And so, (said she) instead of buying a dinner, I suppose you have, as you have done before, been buying *books* with the money?” I then confessed I had bought Young’s Night Thoughts: “And I think (said I) that I have acted wisely; for had I bought *a dinner*, we should have eaten it to-morrow, and the pleasure would have been soon over, but should we live fifty years longer, we shall have the *Night*

Thoughts to feast upon." My wife was convinced. Down I sat, and began to read with as much enthusiasm as the good doctor possessed when he wrote it: and so much did it excite my attention as well as approbation, that I retained the greatest part of it in my memory.

Sometime in June 1775, as we sat at work in our room, Mr. Boyd, one of Mr. Wesley's people, called and informed me that a little shop and parlour were to be let in Featherstone street, and added, that if I was to take it I might there get some work as a master. I without hesitation told him that I liked the idea, and hinted that I would sell books also. Mr. Boyd then asked me, how I came to think of selling books? I informed him that until that moment it had never once entered into my thoughts; but that when he proposed my taking the shop, it instantaneously occurred to my mind, that for several months past I had observed a great increase in a cer-
tain

tain old book shop; and that I was persuaded I knew as much of old books as the person who kept it. I farther observed, that I loved books, and that if I could but be a bookseller, I should then have plenty of books to read, which was the greatest motive I could conceive to induce me to make the attempt. My friend on this assured me, that he would get the shop for me, and with a laugh added, “when *you* are Lord mayor, you shall use all your interest to get *me* made an Alderman.” Which I engaged not to forget to perform.

My *private library* at this time consisted of Fletcher’s Checks to Antinomianism, &c. 5 volumes; Watts’s Improvement of the Mind; Young’s Night Thoughts; Wake’s Translation of the Apostolical Epistles; Fleetwood’s Life of Christ; the first twenty numbers of Hinton’s Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences; some of Wesley’s Journals, and some of the pious lives, published by him; and about a dozen other volumes of the latter sort, besides

besides odd magazines, &c. And to set me up in this stile, Mr. Boyd recommended me to the friends of an holy brother lately gone to heaven, and of them I purchased a bagful of old books, chiefly divinity, for a guinea.

With this stock, and some odd scraps of leather, which together with all my books were worth about five pounds, I opened shop on Midsummer day, 1775, in Featherstone-Street, in the Parish of St. Luke; and I was as well pleased in surveying my little shop with my name over it, as was Nebuchadnezzar, when he said “Is not this great Babylon that I have built?” and my good wife often perceiving the pleasure that I took in my shop, piously cautioned me against setting my mind on the riches of this world, and assured me that it was all but vanity. “You are very right, my dear, I sometimes replied, and to keep our minds as spiritual as we can, we will always attend our class and band meetings, hear as many sermons, &c. at the Foundry

Foundry on week days as possible, and on sabbath days we will mind nothing but the good of our souls: our small beer shall be fetched in on Saturday nights, nor will we dress even a potatoe on the sabbath. We will still attend the preaching at five o'clock in the morning; at eight go to the prayer meeting; at ten to the public worship at the foundry; hear Mr. Perry at Cripplegate, at two; be at the preaching at the Foundry, at five; meet with the general Society at six; meet in the united bands at seven, and again be at the prayer meeting at eight; and then come home and read and pray by ourselves."

I am, dear friend,

Yours, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XIX.

“ ——— Strange vicissitudes of human fate !
 “ Still alt’ring never in a steady state ;
 “ Good after ill, and after pain delight !
 “ Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.
 “ Since every one who lives, is born to die,
 “ And none can boast intire felicity :
 “ With equal mind what happens let us bear,
 “ Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond
 our care
 “ Like pilgrims, to the appointed place we tend :
 “ The world’s an Inn, and death’s the Journey’s end.
 Dryden’s Palemon and Arcite.

Dear Friend,

NOTWITHSTANDING the obscurity
 of the street, and the mean appearance
 of my shop, yet I soon found customers for
 what few books I had, and I as soon laid out
 the money in other old trash which was daily
 brought for sale.

At that time Mr. Wesley’s people had a
 sum of money which was kept on purpose to
 lend

lend out, for three months, to such of their society whose characters were good, and who wanted a temporary relief. To increase my little stock, I borrowed five pounds out of this fund, which was of great service to me.

In our new situation we lived in a very frugal manner, often dining on potatoes, and quenching our thirst with water, being absolutely determined if possible to make some provision for such dismal times as sickness, shortness of work, &c. which we had been so frequently involved in before, and could scarce help expecting to be our fate again. My wife foreboded it much more than I did, being of a more melancholy turn of mind.

“ A sad prophetic Spirit dwells with woe.”

I lived in this street six months, and in that time increased my stock from five pounds, to twenty-five pounds. This stock I deemed too great to be buried in Featherstone-Street; and a shop and parlour being to let in Chiswell-Street, No. 46, I took them. This was at
that

that time, and for fourteen years afterwards a very dull and obscure situation ; but still it was much better adapted for business than Featherstone-Street.

A few weeks after I came into Chiswell-Street, I bade a final adieu to the *gentle craft*, and converted my little stock of leather, &c. into old books ; and a great sale I had, considering my stock ; which was not only very small, but contained very little variety, as it principally consisted of Divinity ; for as I had not much knowledge, so I seldom ventured out of my depth. Indeed, there was one class of books, which for the first year or two that I called myself a Bookseller, I would not sell, for such was my ignorance, bigotry, superstition, (or what you please) that I conscientiously destroyed such books as fell into my hands which were written by free-thinkers : for really supposing them to be dictated by the devil, I would neither read them myself, nor sell them to others.

You

You will perhaps be surpris'd when I inform you, that there are in London, (and I suppose in other populous places) persons who purchase every article which they have occasion for, (and also many articles which they have *no* occasion for) at stalls, beggarly shops, pawnbrokers, &c. under the idea of purchasing *cheaper* than they could at respectable shops, and of men of property. A considerable number of these kind of customers I had in the beginning, who forsook my shop as soon as I began to appear more respectable, by introducing better order, possessing more valuable books, and having acquired a better judgment, &c. Notwithstanding which, I declare to you, upon my honour, that these very bargain hunters have given me double the price that I now charge for thousands and tens of thousands of volumes. For as a tradesman increases in respectability and opulence, his opportunities of purchasing increase proportionably, and the more he buys and sells, the
more

more he becomes a judge of the real value of his goods. It was for want of this experience and judgment, Stock, &c. that for several years I was in the habit of charging more than double the price I now do for many thousand articles. But professed bargain hunters often purchase old *locks* at the stalls in Moorfields, when half the wards are rusted off and taken out, and give more for them than they would have paid for new locks to any reputable ironmonger. And what numerous instances of this infatuation do we meet with daily at sales by auction, not of books only, but of many other articles! Of which I could here adduce a variety of glaring instances: but (not to tire you) a few of recent date shall suffice.—At the sale of Mr. Rigby's books at Mr. Christie's, Martyn's Dictionary of Natural History sold for *fifteen guineas*, which then stood in my catalogue at *four pounds fifteen shilling*, Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters, at *seven guineas*, usually sold at

three

three ; Francis's Horace, *two pounds eleven shillings*, and many others in the same manner. At Sir George Colebrook's sale, the octavo edition of the Tatler fold for *two guineas and a half*. At a sale a few weeks since, Rapin's History, in folio, the two first volumes only (instead of five) fold for upwards of *five pounds*!

I went on prosperously until some time in September, 1775, when I was suddenly taken ill of a dreadful fever ; and eight or ten days after, my wife was seized with the same disorder.

At that time I only kept a boy to help in my shop, so that I fear, while I lay ill, my wife had too much care and anxiety on her mind. I have been told that before she was confined to her bed she walked about in a delirious state ; in which she did not long continue, but contrary to all expectation died, in enthusiastic rant, on the ninth of November, surrounded with several methodistical preachers.

“ Invidious death ! how dost thou rend in sunder
 “ Whom love has knit and sympathy made one ?
 “ A tie so stubborn.”

Blair's Grave.

She was in reality one of the best of women ; and although for about four years she was ill the greatest part of the time, which involved me in the very depth of poverty and distress, yet I never once repented having married her. 'Tis true she was enthusiastical to an extreme, and of course very superstitious and visionary, but as I was very far gone myself, I did not think that a fault in her.

Indeed she much exceeded me, and most others that ever fell under my observation, as she in reality *totally* neglected and disregarded every kind of pleasure *whatever*, but those of a spiritual (or visionary) nature. Methinks I here see you smile : but I assure you she made *no* exception ; but was a complete devotee, though without pride or ill-nature.

I thought to have concluded this letter here,
 but

but a friend of mine, of whose veracity I entertain the highest opinion, has favored me with an account of a lady, who has to the full as much of the spirit, but without the good-nature of Nancy Lackington. The fact is as follows:

“ ’Tis true ’tis pity : and pity ’tis its true.

“ And tho’ strange the story, yet by G— ’tis true.”

Mr. R—t, a genteel tradesman with whom I am acquainted, having lost his second wife early in 1790, courted and married one of the holy sisters a few months afterwards. They had lived together about six months, when Mr. R—t, one Sunday, being a sober religious man, took down Doddridge’s Lectures, and began to read them to his wife and family. But this holy Sister found fault with her husband for reading such learned rational discourses, which favoured too much of human reason and vain philosophy, and wished he would read something more spiritual and edifying. He attempted to convince her that

Dr. Doddridge was not only a good rational divine, but to the full as spiritual as any divine ought to be; and that to be more spiritual he must be less rational, and of course become fanatical and visionary. But these observations of the husband so displeased his spiritual wife, that she retired to bed, and left her husband to read Doddridge's Lectures as long as he chose to his children by a former wife.

The next morning while Mr. R—t was out on business, this holy sister, without saying one syllable to any person, packed up all her cloaths, crammed them into a hackney coach, and away she went. Mr. R—t, poor soul! on coming home discovered his immense loss, and in an almost frantic state, spent the first fortnight in fruitless attempts to discover her retreat.

“ Three weeks after her elopement, I was (says Mr. R—t) “ going down Cheapside one “ day, and saw a lady something like my “ wife,

“ wife, but as she was somewhat disguised,
 “ and I could not see her face, I was not sure.
 “ At last I ventured to look under her bonnet,
 “ and found, that, sure enough, it was she.
 “ I then walked three times backwards and
 “ forwards in Cheapside, endeavouring to per-
 “ suade her to return with me, or to discover
 “ where she lived : but she obstinately refused
 “ to return, or to let me see her retreat ; and
 “ here (says Mr. R—t) I begged that she
 “ would grant me a kiss ; but she would not
 “ willingly. However after some bustle in
 “ the street, I took a farewell kiss. Poor
 “ dear soul ! (sigh’d he) she is rather *too*
 “ *spiritual* ! for notwithstanding I laid by her
 “ side near six months, she never would be
 “ prevailed upon to do any thing carnal ; and
 “ although I did all in my power to get the
 “ better of her spiritual scruples, yet she was
 “ always so in love with Christ her heavenly
 “ spouse, that when she eloped from me, she

“ was, I assure you, as good a virgin as when
 “ I married her.”

The above puts me in mind of what Ovid
 says was practised by young maids on the
 festival of the celebrated nymph *Anna Perenna*,
 thus translated by I know not who :

“ With promises the amorous god she led,
 “ And with fond hopes his eager passion fed,
 “ At length 'tis done, the goddess yields, she cry'd ;
 “ My pray'rs have gain'd the victory o'er pride.
 “ With joy the god prepares the golden bed ;
 “ Thither, her face conceal'd, is Anna led,
 “ Just on the brink of blifs, she stands confess'd ;
 “ The disappointed lover is her jest,
 “ While rage and shame alternate swells his breast. }

I am, dear friend,

Your's, &c.

LET-

LETTER XX.

“ Women that leave no stone unturn’d,

“ In which the cause might be concern’d.”

Hudibras.

Dear Friend,

BECAUSE some of the holy sisters are in their amours altogether spiritual, you are by no means to understand that they are *all* so totally divested of the carnal propensity.

Some of these good creatures are so far from thinking that their husbands are too carnal in their affections, that they really think that they are not enough so ; and instances are not wanting, in which, owing to their having husbands too spiritual, they have been obliged to receive assistance from the husbands of other women.

It is but about a year since a certain celebrated preacher used to administer carnal consolation to the wife of his clerk. This holy communication was repeated so often, and so open that at last it came to the clerk's ears, who watching an opportunity, one day surprized the pious pair at their *devotion*, and so *belaboured* the preacher with his walking-staff, that the public were for near a month deprived of the benefits resulting from his remarkable gift of eloquence.

As I am got into the story-telling way, I cannot resist the temptation of telling another.

A certain holy sister who lately kept an house in a country village near London, and *took in* (as they called it) Mr. Wesley's preachers, [by taking *in* is only meant, that when they came in their turn to preach in the village she used to supply each with victuals and a bed; *no doubt* but they slept *alone*.] This lady was so very remarkable for her spiritual *experience* and divine gifts, that she

she attracted many to her house, besides such as came in the regular course of their duty, and among the former a preacher from London, from whom I learnt the affair. This preacher happening to want a wife, and being very spiritually-minded, actually married her in December 1790, merely for her great gifts and grace, as her fortune was not above the fiftieth part as much as his own; and as to person, she is scarce one degree above ugliness itself; although her husband is well-proportioned, and upon the whole a handsome man. They had not been married a week, when this simple preacher discovered this gifted gracious saint was an incarnate devil, who had married him only to rob, plunder, and cuckold him. For between her and her gallants, they had bullied him out of a settlement to the amount of four times the sum she brought him, and the poor pious preacher thinks that he has cheaply got rid of her.

The reason why I interest myself in his behalf,

half is, because I am confident that he really is an honest well-meaning man at the bottom; but withal one that does not possess the greatest share of understanding, and who being formerly but a mean mechanic, never had any education, so that although he is a great enthusiast, yet he is one of the good-natured inoffensive sort, who will do no harm to any person, but will do all the good in his power. I am only sorry, as he lately was an honest useful tradesman, that he should have so much spiritual quixotism in him, as at thirty years of age to shut up his shop and turn preacher, without being able to read his primer; which upon my honour, is the case. But here, my friend, you see I forgot that these heavenly teachers only speak as the spirit giveth utterance, and that of course all human learning is entirely superfluous.

——“ As he does not chuse to cull,
 “ His faith by any scripture rule;
 “ But by the vapours that torment
 “ His brains, from hypocondria sent,

Which

“ Which into dreams and visions turn,
 “ And make his zeal so fiercely burn,
 “ That reason loses the ascendant.
 “ And all within grows independant,
 “ He proves all such as do accord
 “ With him the chosen of the Lord ;
 “ But that all others are accurst,
 “ ’Tis plain in canticles the first.”

Butler's Posth. Works.

A few years since the methodist-preachers
 got footing in Wellington, (the famous birth-
 place of your humble servant) and establish-
 ed a society there, soon after which one of
 their preachers (at Collopton, a neighbouring
 town) happened to like a young servant girl,
 who was one of the holy Sisters, she having
 gone through the new birth, better than his
 wife, because she was an unenlightened, un-
 converted woman. But this servant girl hap-
 pening to be with child, the news soon reached
 Wellington ; and a very wealthy gentleman
 who entertained the preachers there, followed
 the preacher of Collopton's example, and got
 his own pious maid with child. After this
 some

some of the Society in Wellington began to have all things in common, and several more of the holy Sisters proved prolific: which so alarmed the parish, that some of the heads of it insisted that the preachers should not be permitted to preach there any longer. "For, if (said they) the methodist-society continues, we shall have the parish full of bastards."

So you see, my dear friend, by the above examples, (were it necessary, I could give you many more) that not all the converted and sanctified females are thereby become so absorbed in the spiritual delights of the mystical union, as to have lost all relish for carnal connexions; as we find that many among them are blessed with a mind so capacious, as to be able to relish the pleasures of both worlds.

L E T-

LETTER XXI.

“ It was not good for man to be alone :

“ An equal, yet the subject, is design’d

“ For thy soft hours, and to unbend the Mind.”

Dryden.

Dear Friend,

AFTER a long digression, I must now return to my own affairs.

I continued in the above-mentioned dreadful fever many weeks, and my life was despaired of by all that came near me. During which time, my wife, whom I affectionately loved, died and was buried, without my once having a sight of her. And what added much to my misfortunes, several nurses that were hired to take care of me and my wife, proved so abandoned and depraved as to have lost all sense of moral obligation, and every tender

tender feeling for one who to all appearance was just on the point of death: several of these monsters in female shape robbed my drawers of linnen, &c. and kept themselves drunk with gin, while I lay unable to move in my bed, and was ready to perish, partly owing to want of cleanliness and proper care. In this state I must inevitably have perished, had it not been for my sister Dorothy, wife of Mr. Northoun of Lambeth, and my sister Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Bell in Soho. These kind sisters, as soon as they were informed of the deplorable state in which I lay, notwithstanding some misunderstanding which subsisted between us, and prevented me from sending for them, hastened to me, and each sat up with me alternately, so that I had one or the other with me every night; and, contrary to all expectation, I recovered. But this recovery was in a very slow manner.

As soon as I was able to enquire into the state of my affairs, I found that Mr. Wheeler, sack

sack and rope-maker in Old-street, and Messrs. Bottomley and Shaw, carpenters and fash-makers in Bunhill-row, had saved me from ruin, by locking up my shop, which contained my little *all*. Had not this been done, the nurses would no doubt have contrived means to have emptied my shop, as they had done my drawers.

The above gentlemen not only took care of my shop, but also advanced money to pay such expences as occurred; and as my wife was dead, they assisted in making my will in favour of my mother.

These worthy gentlemen belong to Mr. Wesley's Society, (and notwithstanding they have imbibed many enthusiastic whims) yet would they be an honour to any society, and are a credit to human nature. I hope that I never shall recollect their kindness without being filled with the warmest sentiments of gratitude towards them.

“ He

“ He that hath Nature in him must be grateful :
 “ ’Tis the Creator’s primary great Law,
 “ That links the chain of being to each other,
 “ Joining the greater to the lesser nature,
 “ Tying the weak and strong, the poor and powerful,
 “ Subduing men to brutes, and even brutes to men.”

On my recovery I also learnt that Miss Dorcas Turton, (the young woman that kept the house, and of whom I then rented the shop, parlour, kitchen and garret) having out of kindness to my wife, occasionally assisted her during her illness, had caught the same dreadful disorder, and was then very dangerously ill, and that people shunned the house as much as though the plague was in it. So that when I opened my shop again, I was stared at as though I had come back from the other world ; and it was a considerable time before many of my former customers could credit that I really was in existence, it having been repeatedly reported that I was dead.

Miss

Miss Dorcas Turton, was a charming young woman, and you must now be made farther acquainted with her. She was the daughter of Mr. Samuel Turton of Staffordshire, her mother did not by marrying change her name, which was Miss Jemima Turton, of Oxfordshire, Mr. Samuel Turton had a large fortune of his own, and about twenty thousand pounds with his wife Miss Jemima, but by an unhappy turn for gaming he dissipated nearly the whole of it, and was obliged to have recourse to trade to help to support his family.

“ ’Tis lost at dice, what ancient honour won,

“ Hard, when the father plays away the son!

He opened a shop as a Sadler’s Ironmonger, but as he was but little acquainted with trade, and as his old propensity to gaming never quitted him, it is no wonder that he did not succeed in his business ; and to crown all his other follies, he was bound for a false friend in a large sum ; this compleated his ruin.

M

His

His wife died in Jan. 1773, and his final ruin ensued a few months after ; so that from that time to his death he was partly supported by his daughter Miss Dorcas Turton, who cheerfully submitted to keep a school, and worked very hard at plain work, by which means she kept her father from want. The old gentleman died a few months after I came into the shop. Being partly acquainted with this young lady's goodness to her father, I concluded that so good a daughter was very likely to make a good wife ; I also knew that she was immoderately fond of books, and would frequently read until morning ; this turn of mind in her was the greatest of all recommendations to me, who having acquired a few ideas, was at that time restless to increase them : so that I was in raptures with the bare thoughts of having a woman to read with, and also to read to me.

“ Of all the pleasures, noble and refin'd,
 “ Which form the taste and cultivate the mind,
 “ In every realm where science darts its beams :
 “ From Thale's ice to Afric's golden streams,
 “ From

“ From climes where Phœbus pours his orient ray,
 “ To the fair regions of declining day,
 “ The “ Feast of Reason” which from READING springs
 “ To reas’ning man the highest solace brings.
 “ ’Tis Books a lasting pleasure can supply,
 “ Charm while we live, and teach us how to die.”

I embraced the first opportunity after her recovery to make her acquainted with my mind, and as we were no strangers to each others characters and circumstances, there was no need of a long formal courtship ; so I prevailed on her not to defer our union longer than the 30th of January, 1776, when I for the second time entered into the holy state of matrimony.

— “ Wedded Love is founded on esteem,
 “ Which the fair merits of the mind engage :
 “ For those are charms that never can decay,
 “ But Time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,
 “ Improves their lustre:”

Fenton.

I am, dear friend,

Yours, &c.

 LETTER XXII.

“ Reason re-baptiz’d me when adult :

“ Weigh’d true from false, in her impartial scale.”

Young.

“ All the mystic lights were quench’d.”

Lee.

Dear Friend,

I AM now in February 1776, arrived at an important period of my life. Being lately recovered from a very painful, dangerous, and hopeless illness, I found myself once more in a confirmed state of health, surrounded by my little stock in trade, which was but just saved from thieves, and which to me was an immense treasure. Add to the above, my having won a second time in a game where the odds were so much against me ; or to use another simile, my having drawn another prize in the lottery of wedlock, and thus repaired the

loss

loss of one very valuable woman with the acquisition of another still more valuable.

“ O Woman ! let the libertine decry,
 “ Rail at the virtuous love he never felt,
 “ Nor wish’d to feel.—Among the sex there are
 “ Numbers as greatly good as they are fair ;
 “ Where rival virtues strive which brightens most,
 “ Beauty the smallest excellence they boast ;
 “ Where all unite substantial bliss to prove,
 “ And give mankind in them a taste of joys above.”

Hayward.

On reflecting on the above united circumstances, I found in my mind an unusual sensation, such as until then I was a stranger to : my mind began to expand, intellectual light and pleasure broke in and dispelled the gloom of fanatical melancholy ; the sourness of my natural temper (which had been much increased by superstition, which Swift calls, “ the spleen of the soul,”) in part gave way, and was succeeded by cheerfulness, and some degree of good-nature.

It was in one of these cheerful moods that I one day took up the Life of John Bun-

cle; and it is impossible for my friend to imagine with what eagerness and pleasure I read through the whole four volumes of this sensible pleasing work; it was wrote by the late Mr. Amory of Wakefield, and I know not of any work more proper to be put into the hands of a poor ignorant bigotted superstitious methodist; but the misfortune is, that scarce any of them will read any thing but what suits with their own narrow notions, so that they shut themselves up in darknes, and exclude every ray of intellectual light; which puts me in mind of the enthusiasts on the banks of the Ganges, who will not look at any thing beyond the tip of their noses. By the time I had gone through the last volume,

“ My soul had took its freedom up.”

Green.

I now began to enjoy many innocent pleasures and recreations in life, without the fear of being eternally damn'd for a laugh, a joke, or for spending a sociable evening with a few friends, going to the play-house, &c. &c.

In

In short I saw that true religion was no way incompatible with or an enemy to rational pleasures of any kind.

“ Fools by excess make varied pleasure pall,

“ The wise man’s moderate, and enjoys them all.”

Voltaire by Franklin.

I now also began to read with great pleasure the rational and moderate divines of all denominations : and a year or two after I began with metaphysics, in the intricate though pleasing labyrinths of which I have occasionally wandered ever since, nor am I ever likely to find my way out.

“ Like a guide in a mist have I rambled about,

“ And now come at last where at first I set out.

I am not in the least uneasy on that head, as I have no doubt of being in my last moments able to adopt the prayer of one of the greatest men that ever existed :

“ Great God, whose being by thy works is known,

“ Hear my last words from thy eternal throne :

“ If I mistook, ’twas while thy law I sought,

“ I may have err’d, but thou wert in each thought.

“ Fearless I look beyond the opening grave,
 “ And cannot think the God who being gave,
 “ The God whose favours made my blifs o’erflow,
 “ Has doom’d me, after death, to endless woe.

Having begun to think rationally, and reason freely on religious matters, you may be sure I did not long remain in Mr. Wesley’s Society ; and what is remarkable, I well remember that some years before, Mr. Wesley told his Society in Broadmead, Bristol, in my hearing, that he could never keep a bookseller six months in his flock. He was then pointing out the danger that attended close reasoning in matters of religion and spiritual concerns, in reading controversies, &c. at that time I had not the least idea of my ever becoming a Bookseller : but I no sooner began to give scope to my reasoning faculties than the above remarkable assertion occurred to my mind.

But that which rather hastened my departure from methodism was this. The
 methodist

methodist preachers were continually repro-
bating the practice of masters and mistresses
keeping servants at home on fundays, to dress
dinners, which prevented them from hearing
the Word of God (by the Word of God they
mean their own jargon of nonsense), assuring
them if the souls of such servants were damn-
ed, they might in a great measure lay their
damnation at the doors of such masters and
mistresses, who rather than eat a cold dinner,
would be guilty of breaking the sabbath, and
risking the souls of their servants. But how
great was my surprize on discovering that these
very men who were continually preaching up
fasting, abstinence, &c. to their congrega-
tions, and who wanted others to dine off cold
dinners, or eat bread and cheese, &c. would
themselves not even *sup*, without roasted
fowls, &c.

This I found to be fact, as I several times
had occasion after preaching to go into the
kitchen behind the *old Foundry* (which at
that

that time was Mr. Wesley's preaching house;) there I saw women who had been kept from hearing the sermon, &c. by being employed in roasting fowls, and otherwise providing good suppers, for the preachers.

So said I, "you lay burthens on other men's shoulders, but will not so much as touch them yourselves with one of your fingers." I am, dear friend,

Yours, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIII.

“ Good morrow to thee: How dost do?

“ I only just call'd in, to shew

“ My Love, upon this blessed day,

“ As I by chance came by this way.”

Butler's posth. works.

Dear Friend,

I HAD no sooner left Mr. Wesley's society, and begun to talk a little more like a rational being, but I found that I had incurred the hatred of some, the pity of others, the envy of many, and the displeasure of *all* Mr. Wesley's—*old women*! So that for a long time I was constantly teased with their impertinent nonsense. I believe that never was a poor devil so plagued. Some as they passed by my door in their way to the Foundry would only make a stop and lift up their hands, turn up the whites of their eyes, shake their heads, groan, and pass on. Many would call in and take me aside, and after making rueful faces, would address me with,

“ Oh,

“ Oh, brother Lackington ! I am very sorry to find that you who begun in the Spirit are now like to end in the flesh. Pray Brother, do remember Lot’s wife.” Another would interrupt me in my business, to tell me, that “ he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is unfit for the kingdom.” Another has just called as he was passing by, to caution me against the bewitching snares of prosperity. Others again called to know if I was as happy then as I was when I constantly fought the Lord with my brethren, in prayer meeting, in class, in band, &c. When I assured them that I was more happy, they in a very solemn manner assured me, that I was under a very great delusion of the devil ; and when I by chance happened to laugh at their enthusiastic rant, some have run out of my shop, declaring that they were afraid to stay under the same roof with me, lest the house should fall on their heads. Sometimes I have been accosted in such an alarming manner as though

though the house was on fire, with "Oh! Brother! Brother! you are fast asleep! and the flames of hell are taking hold of you!"

A certain preacher assured me, in the presence of several gentlemen, that the devil would soon toss me about in the flames of hell with a pitchfork. This same eloquent mild preacher used occasionally to strip to his shirt to dodge the devil.

Mr. E. a gentleman of my acquaintance, going through some alley, one Sunday, hearing a very uncommon noise, was led by curiosity to the house from whence it proceeded, and there he saw elevated above an assembly of old women, &c. this taylor, stripped in his shirt, with his wig off, sweating, foaming at the mouth, and bellowing like a baited bull. In the above manner it seems he would often amuse himself and his congregation for near two hours,

"Cursing from his sweating tub,

"The cavaliers of Belzebub."

Butler's posth. Works.

Others

Others again of the *Tabernacle* saints would assure me that I never had one grain of saving grace, and that when I thought myself a child of God, I was only deluded by the devil, who being now quite sure of me, did not think it worth his while to deceive me any longer. Others advised me to take care of sinning against light and knowledge, and piously hoped that it was not quite *too late*; that I had not (they hoped) committed the *unpardonable* sin against the Holy Ghost. Others again, who happened to be in a better humour, often assured me that they should see me brought back to the true sheepfold, as they really hoped I had once been in a state of grace, and if so, that I always was in grace, in spite of all I could do: the Lord would never quit his hold of me; that I might fall *foully*, but that it was impossible for me to fall *finally*, as in the end I should be brought back on the shoulders of the everlasting gospel,

pel, for when God came to number his jewels, not one would be missing.

One of these righteous men, after passing some encomiums on me for my moral character, assured me that I had by no means fallen so low as many of God's children had fallen, but fall as low as they possibly can, said he, they are still God's children, for altho' they may "be black with sin they are fair within." He then read to me the following passage out of a pamphlet written against Mr. Fletcher, by Mr. R. Hill. "David stood as
 " completely justified in the everlasting right-
 " eousness of Christ, at the time when he
 " caused Uriah to be murdered, and was com-
 " mitting adultery with his wife, as he was
 " in any part of his life. For all the sins of
 " the Elect, be they more or be they less,
 " be they past, present, or to come, were for
 " ever done away. So that every one of those
 " *elect* stand spotless in the sight of God."

Is not this a very comfortable kind of doctrine?

trine? The pernicious consequences of such tenets impressed on the minds of the ignorant followers of these quacks in religion, must be obvious to every person capable of reflection. They have nothing to do but to enlist themselves in the band of the Elect, and no matter then how criminal their life!

Thus, my dear friend, I was for a long time coaxed by some, threatened with all the tortures of the damned by others, and constantly teased somehow or other by all the methodists who came near me. I at last determined to laugh at all their ridiculous perversions of the scripture, and their spiritual cant. The consequence (as might be expected) was, they piously and charitably consigned me over to be tormented by the devil, and every where declared that I was turned a downright atheist. But the aspersions of such fanatics gave me no concern, for

“ ——— If there’s a power above us,

“ (And that there is, all nature cries aloud

“ Through

“ Through all her works) he must delight in Virtue ;
 “ And that which he delights in must be happy.

Addison's Cato.

And no matter “ when or where.” After relating such ridiculous stuff as the above, I think that I cannot conclude this better than with Swift's humorous and satirical account of the Day of Judgment.

“ With a whirl of thought oppress'd,
 “ I sunk from reverie to rest,
 “ An horrid vision seiz'd my head,
 “ I saw the graves give up their dead :
 “ Jove arm'd with terrors bursts the skies,
 “ And thunder roars, and light'ning flies !
 “ Amaz'd, confus'd, its fate unknown,
 “ The world stands trembling at his throne !
 “ While each pale sinner hung his head,
 “ Jove nodding shook the heavens and said,
 “ Offending race of human kind,
 “ By nature, reason, learning, blind :
 “ You who through frailty step'd aside,
 “ And you who never fell through pride,
 “ You who in different sects were sham'd,
 “ And come to see each other damn'd ?
 “ (So some folks told you, but they knew,
 “ No more of Jove's designs than you)

N

The

“ The world's mad business now is o'er.

“ And I resent those pranks no more.

“ —I to such blockheads set my wit!

“ I damn such fools ! go, go, you're bit.

I am, dear friend,

Your's, &c.

L E T-



LETTER XXIV.

“ In London streets is often seen,
 “ A hum-drum saint with holy mein,
 “ His looks most primitively wear,
 “ An antient Abrahamick air,
 “ And like bad copies of a face,
 “ The good original disgrace.”

Butler's Poeth. Works.

Dear Friend,

IT being generally known that I had for many years been a strict methodist, since I have freed myself from their shackles, I have been often asked if I did not believe or rather know, that the methodists were a vile sect of hypocrites altogether? My reply has been uniformly in the negative. I am certain that they are not in general so. The major part of them indeed are very ignorant, (as is the case with enthusiasts of every religion.) But I

believe that a great number of the methodists are sincere, honest, friendly people. It may however be necessary to observe, that many artful, sly, designing people, having noticed their character, connections, &c. and knowing that a religious person is in general supposed to be honest and conscientious, have been induced to join their societies, and by assuming an appearance of extraordinary sanctity, have the better been enabled to cheat and defraud such as were not guarded against their hypocritical wiles.

“ Making religion a disguise,

“ Or cloak to all their villanies.”

Butler's Posth. Works.

I have also reason to believe that there are not a few, who think that they can as it were afford to cheat and defraud, on the score of having right notions of religion in their *heads*, hearing what they deem orthodox teachers, going to prayer-meetings, &c.

There

There are again, others, who think, that grace is so free and so easy to be had, or in other words, that as they can have pardon for all kinds of sins, and that at any time whenever they please, they under this idea make very little conscience of running up large scores, to which practice I fear such doctrines as I noticed in my last, from the pen of Mr. Hill, have not a little contributed.

I have often thought that great hurt has been done to Society by the methodist preachers, both in town and country, attending condemned Malefactors, as by their fanatical conversation, visionary hymns, bold and impious applications of the scriptures, &c. many dreadful offenders against law and justice, have had their passions and imaginations so worked upon, that they have been sent to the other world in such raptures, as would better become martyrs innocently suffering in a glorious cause, than criminals of the first magnitude.

A great number of narratives of these sudden conversions and triumphant exits have been compiled, many of them published, and circulated with the greatest avidity, to the private emolument of the editors, and doubtless to the great edification of all sinners, long habituated to a course of villainous depredations on the lives and properties of the honest part of the community ; and many such accounts as have not appeared in print, have been assiduously proclaimed in all the methodist chapels and barns, throughout the three kingdoms ; by which the good and pious of every denomination have been scandalized, and notorious offenders encouraged to persevere, trusting sooner or later, to be honoured with a similar degree of notice, and thus by a kind of legerdemain be suddenly transformed into saints.

I must observe farther, that the unguarded manner in which the methodist preachers make tenders of pardon and salvation, has induced

duced many to join their fraternity, whose consciences wanted very large plaisters indeed ! many of those had need to be put under courses of mortification and penance ; but they generally adopt another method, and make themselves as ridiculous by affecting to possess squeamish consciences, as they had before rendered themselves odious by displaying a very opposite disposition. As a friend, permit me to advise you never to purchase any thing at a shop where the master of it crams any of his pious nonsense into his shop-bill, &c. as you may be assured you will nine times out of ten find them, in the end, errant hypocrites ; and as such, they make no scruple of cheating in the way of trade, if possible.

This puts me in mind of one of these pious brethren in Petticoat-lane, who wrote in his shop-window, “ Rumps and Burs sold here, and Baked Sheep’s heads will be continued every night, *if the Lord permit.*” The Lord had no objection ; so Rumps, Burs, and Baked

Sheeps-heads were fold there a long time. And I remember to have seen on a board, near Bedminster-down, “Tripe and Cowheels fold here as usual, except on the Lord’s-day, which *the Lord help me to keep.*” And on my enquiring about the person who exhibited this remarkable shew-board, at the inn just by, I was informed that the pious Tripe-seller generally got drunk on Sundays, after he return’d from the barn-preaching; which accounts for his not selling tripe on that day, having full employment (though possibly not so inoffensive) elsewhere.

I also saw in a village near Plymouth in Devonshire, “Roger Tuttel, *by God’s grae and mercy*, kills rats, moles, and all sorts of vermin and venomous creatures.” But I need not have gone so far, as, no doubt you must remember that a few years since, a certain pious common-council-man of the Metropolis, advertised in the public papers for a porter that could carry *three hundred weight and*
serve

serve the Lord. Of the same worthy personage I have heard it asserted, that so very conscientious is he, that he once staved a barrel of beer in his cellar, because he detected it *working* on the Sabbath day.

“ Seeming devotion doth but gild the knave,
 “ That’s neither faithful, honest, just, or brave,
 “ But where religion does with virtue join,
 “ It makes a hero like an angel shine.”

Waller.

I have a few more observations to make on this remarkable sect, but fearing I have already tired you, shall reserve them for my next, in the mean time I remain,

dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

 LETTER XXV.

“ Under this stone rests Hudibras,
 “ A Knight as errant as e’er was :
 “ The controversy only lies,
 “ Whether he was more fool than wise ;
 “ Full oft he suffer’d bangs and drubs,
 “ And full as oft took pains in tubs :
 “ And for the good old Cause stood buff,
 “ ’Gainst many a bitter kick and cuff,
 “ Of which the most that can be said,
 “ He pray’d and preach’d, and preach’d and pray’d.”

Butler’s posth. Works.

Dear Friend,

IT is very remarkable, that while I was
 writing the last five lines of my former
 letter to you, on Wednesday the 2d of March
 1791, I received the news of the death of
 Mr. John Wesley, who I am informed, died
 that morning at his own house, in the City-
 road, Moorfields, in the Eighty-eighth year
 of

of his age. He had no illness, but the wheels of the machine being worn out, it stopt of course. As I am on the subject of Methodism, I hope you will not deem it impertinent, if I devote a few lines to this great parent of a numerous sect, whom I well knew, and feel a pleasure in speaking of with some respect.

Several days preceding his interment, being laid in his coffin, in his gown and band, he was exposed to the view of his friends and the public; and I suppose that forty or fifty thousand persons had a sight of him. But the concourse of people was so great, that many were glad to get out of the crowd without seeing him at all; and although many constables were present, yet the pick-pockets contrived to ease numbers of their purses, watches, &c,

To prevent as much as possible the dreadful effects of a mob, he was interred on Wednesday March the 9th, between five and six o'clock

o'clock in the morning, in the burial-ground behind his own chapel in the City-road. After which Dr. Whitehead (the physician) preached his funeral sermon; but notwithstanding the early hour, many thousands attended more than the chapel would hold, although it is very large.

As soon as it was known that Mr. Wesley was deceased, a number of needy brethren deemed it a fair opportunity of profiting by it, and each immediately set his ingenuity to work to compose what he chose to call a *Life* of him; and for some weeks since the funeral the Chapel-yard and its vicinity has exhibited a truly ludicrous scene, on every night of preaching, owing to the different writers and venders of these hasty performances exerting themselves to secure a good sale; one bawling out, that *his* is the *right* life, a second with a pious shake of the head, declares *his* the real life, a third protests *he* has got the *only genuine* account; and a fourth calls them all
vile

vile cheats and impostors, &c. so that between all these competitors, the saints are so divided and perplexed in their opinions, that some decline purchasing either, others willing “to try all and keep that which is good,” buy of each of these respectable venders of the life and last account of that celebrated character; while the uninterested passenger is apt to form a conclusion that the house of prayer, is again become a den of thieves. Thus we see those holy candidates for heaven are so influenced by self-interest, that it

“Turns meek and secret sneaking ones

“To Raw-heads fierce and bloody bones.”

Hudibras.

I cannot help thinking that Mr. John Wesley, the Father of the Methodists, was one of the most respectable enthusiasts that ever lived; as he unquestionably believed all that he taught others, and lived the same truly pious exemplary life, that he would have his followers practise. The sale of his
numerous

numerous writings produced nett profits to the amount of near TWO THOUSAND POUNDS per annum; and the weekly collection of the classes in London and Westminster amounted to about a THOUSAND POUNDS per annum; besides this, great sums were collected at the sacraments and love-feasts, for quarterly tickets, private and publick subscriptions, &c. &c. The same kind of collections are made in all his Societies throughout the three kingdoms, so that Mr. Wesley might have amassed an immense fortune, had riches been his object. But instead of accumulating wealth, he expended all his own private property: and I have been often informed, from good authority, that he never denied relief to a poor person that asked him. To needy tradesmen I have known him to give ten or twenty pounds at once. In going a few yards from his study to the pulpit, he generally gave away an handful of half-crowns to poor old people of his Society. He was indeed charitable to an

ex-

extreme, as he often gave to unworthy objects, nor would he keep money sufficient to hold out on his journies. One of his friends informs me that he left but £4. 10s. 0. behind him: and I have heard him declare that he would not die worth twenty pounds, except his Books for sale, &c.

His learning and great abilities are well known. But I cannot help noticing that in one of his publications (stepping out of his line) he betray'd extreme weakness and credulity, though no doubt his intentions were good. What I allude to is his "*Primitive Physic*;" a work certainly of a dangerous tendency, as the majority of remedies therein prescribed are most assuredly inefficacious, and many of them very dangerous, if administered. The consequence of the first is, that while poor ignorant people are trying these remedies, (besides the very great probability of their mistaking the case) the diseases perhaps become so inveterate as to resist the power of more efficacious

efficacious remedies properly applied, and with regard to those of a highly dangerous nature, how rash to trust them in the hands of such uninformed people as this book was almost solely intended for, especially when sanctioned by the name of an author whose influence impressed the minds of the unfortunate patients with the most powerful conviction. Many fatal effects, I fear, have been produced by a blind adherence to this compilation ; which carries with it more the appearance of being the production of an ignorant opinionated old woman, than of the man of science and education. One melancholy instance is fresh in my memory ; a much esteemed friend having fallen an immediate sacrifice to an imprudent application of one of these remedies.

A very worthy Physician, to whom the Community are highly indebted for his indefatigable and successful exertions in the cause of humanity, published some judicious remarks

marks on the “*Primitive Physic*,” which however, for obvious reasons, did not meet with that general attention the subject deserved; as almost all the admirers of Mr. Wesley’s work consisted of his followers, (sufficiently numerous indeed to ensure a very extensive sale) these were too bigoted to condescend to peruse any production tending to enlighten their understandings; and the public at large, not having paid much attention to it, did not conceive themselves so materially interested in the Remarks.

Should you, my dear friend, be desirous of perusing a variety of remedies, equally *judicious* as well as *efficacious* with those of Mr. Wesley, you will meet with ample satisfaction by turning to “*Dom Pernetty’s Voyage to the Falkland Islands*,” page 153 to 162.

It was a circumstance peculiarly happy for the practitioners of Physic, though no doubt a terrible misfortune to the public, that the difference in religious principles of these two

O

reverend

reverend gentlemen proved an effectual bar to the union of their medical abilities, which appear so exactly correspondent; had such an event taken place, that horrid monster *Disease* might by this time have been banished from the earth, and the sons of *Æsculapius* would be doomed to feed on their own compositions or starve!

But here, though the subject is serious, I think I see you smile at my censuring Mr. Wesley for *stepping out of his line*, when at the very moment I am committing the same error by obtruding my judgment upon the science of Physic.—I shall only reply, Many thought I did the same when I commenced Bookseller; and a friend once taught me the motto, (be not offended, 'tis the only scrap of Latin I shall give you) “*Ne Sutor ultra crepidam.*” But the event has proved it otherwise, and I flatter myself every candid and judicious person capable of judging will think with me on the above subject.—But to resume my narrative.

What

What a pity that such a character as Mr. Wesley should be a dupe and a rank enthusiast ! however we may safely affirm that he was a good sincere and honest one, who denied himself many things ; and thought that he disregarded the praise and blame of the world, when he was more courted, respected, and followed than any man living, and he ruled over near an hundred thousand people with an almost absolute sway. I am inclined to believe that his death will be attended with consequences somewhat similar to those which followed the death of Alexander the great. His spiritual generals will be putting in their pretensions, and soon divide their master's conquests. His death happened at a time rather critical to the methodists, as the *Swedenborgians*, or *New Jerusalemists*, are gaining ground very fast : Many of the methodists are already gone over to their party, many more will now, undoubtedly follow ; and the death of that great female champion of methodism, the Countess

of Huntingdon, which has since happened, will in all probability occasion another considerable defection from *that* branch of methodists, and an additional reinforcement to the Swedenborgians ; a proof of the fondness of mankind for novelty, even in religious matters.

I shall conclude my remarks on the Methodists in my next, I am,

Dear Friend, Yours, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XXVI.

“ More haughty than the rest, the — race,
“ Appear with belly gaunt, and famish’d face :
“ Never was so deform’d a beast of grace.”

Dryden.

Dear Friend,

ALTHOUGH Mr. Wesley was possessed of a very great share both of natural and acquired abilities, yet I suppose it scarcely necessary to inform you, that this is by no means the case with his preachers in general : For although there are amongst them some truly sensible, intelligent men, yet the major part are very ignorant and extremely illiterate : many of these excellent spiritual guides cannot even read a chapter in the Bible, though containing the deep mysteries which they have the rashness and presumption to pretend

to explain. Many others cannot write their own names. But so great is the ignorance of Mr. Wesley's people in general, that they often neglect the more rational and sensible of their preachers, and are better pleased with such as are even destitute of common sense; really believing that the incoherent nonsense which they from time to time pour forth, is dictated by the Holy Spirit; for which several reasons may be assigned.

It is always observable, that the more ignorant people are, the more confidence they possess. This confidence, or *impudence*, passes with the vulgar, as a mark of their being in the right; and the more the ignorance of the preachers is discovered, the more are they brought down to their own standard. Again, the more ignorant preachers having very contracted ideas of real religion and manly virtue, of course supply the want of it with a ridiculous fuss about trifles, which passes with the ignorant for a more sanctified deportment,
and

and hence arises much of the mischief which has been so justly charged on the Methodists. For by making the path to Heaven so very narrow, many despairing to be ever able to walk in it, have thrown off all religion and morality, and sunk into the abyss of vice and wickedness. Others have their tempers so soured as to become lost to all the tender connexions of husband, wife, father, child, &c. really believing that they are *literally* to *hate* father, mother, &c. for Christ's sake. Many have in a fit of despondency put a period to their existence, it having become a burthen too intolerable to be borne. Some have been so infatuated with the idea of fasting to mortify the flesh, that their strict perseverance in it has been productive of the most serious consequences: Two instances of which lately occurred in one family, in the City road—The Mistress was deprived of her senses, and the Maid *literally* fasted herself to death!

A few years since, I saw in a field, not seven miles from town, a man tossing up his Bible in the air. This he often repeated, and raved at a strange rate. Amongst other things, (pointing to a building at some distance) “*That* (said he) is the *Devil’s* House, and it “shall not stand three days longer!” On the third day after this I saw with surprize an account in one of the public papers of that very building having been set on fire, and burnt to the ground.

This maniac soon after preached very often in Smithfield and Moorfields; but he did not wholly depend on the operations of the holy spirit, as at last he seldom began to preach until he was nearly drunk, or filled with another kind of spirit, and then he was “a very powerful preacher indeed.” But the good man happening several times to exert himself rather too much, had nearly tumbled headlong out of his portable pulpit, these accidents the mob *uncharitably* ascribed to the liquor

liquor that he had drank, and with mud, stones, dead cats, &c. drove him off every time he came, until at last our preacher took his leave of them with saying “that he perceived it was in vain to attempt their conversion, as he saw that God had given them over to the hardness of their hearts.”

But although this holy man deserted them, yet other spiritual knights-errant were not wanting, so that a little time before the heaps of stones which lay for years in Moorfields were removed for the purpose of building on the spot, I have seen five or six in a day preaching their initiation sermons from those elevated situations, until they could collect a sufficient sum of money to purchase pulpits. Some of these excellent preachers received the whole of their divine education and took up their degrees in Moorfields, and in due time, after having given ample and satisfactory proofs of being properly qualified, have been admitted to professorships in the noble College
situated

situated on the south side of those fields, generally known by the name of *Bethlem*. You must know, sir, that many of the lazy sort of the community set up stalls in Moorfields to buy and sell apples, old iron, &c. several of these having heard many such edifying discourses, as they sat at their stalls, and observing the success which those kind of preachers met with, boldly resolved to make trial of their spiritual gifts on the heaps of stones, and have now totally abandoned their stalls, and are gone forth as ambassadors of heaven; tho' without being furnished with any diplomas as such. One of these who cannot read, lately informed me that he had quitted all temporal concerns for the good of poor ignorant sinners. However after all, "there is (possibly) a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know." The subject of methodism is so fertile a one, that were I disposed to enlarge thereon, my correspondence would be extended to a very considerable length; but instead

of

of pursuing it, I think it better to apologize for having so long digressed from the main subject of my narrative. I therefore take a final leave of methodism, with assuring you, that in giving a general idea of the tenets and practices of a numerous sect who have excited much public attention, I have invariably had in view to "speak of them as they are: nothing to extenuate, nor set down ought in malice." And in my next shall resume the account of my own affairs, in the mean time, I remain, dear friend,

Yours, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXVII.

“Passion, ’tis true may hurry us along,
“Sometimes the just may deviate into wrong.”

Voltaire by Franklin.

Dear Friend,

MY new wife’s attachment to books was a very fortunate circumstance for us both, as it was not only a perpetual source of rational amusement, but also as it tended to promote my trade; her extreme love for books made her delight to be in the shop, where she soon became perfectly acquainted with every part of it, and (as my stock increased) with other rooms where I kept books; and could readily get any article that was asked for. So that when I was out on business, my shop was well attended; this constant attention and good usage procured me many customers, and I soon perceived that I could sell double and treble the
quantity

quantity of books if I had a larger stock. But how to enlarge it, I knew not, except by slow degrees, as my profits should enable me; for as I was almost a stranger in London, I had but few acquaintances, and these few were not of the opulent sort. I also saw that the town abounded with cheats, swindlers, &c. who under false pretences obtained money and other property, of which the credulous were defrauded, which often prevented me from endeavouring to borrow, lest I should be suspected of having the same bad designs.

Soon after I commenced bookseller, I became acquainted with what Pope calls “the noblest work of God,” an HONEST man. This was Mr. JOHN DENIS, an oil-man in Cannon-street, (father of the present Mr. John Denis, Bookseller.) This gentleman had often visited me during my long illness, and having seen me tranquil and serene when on the very point of death, he formed a favourable conclusion that I too must be an honest man, as I had so quiet

a conscience at such an awful period. Having retained these ideas of me after my recovery, and being perfectly well acquainted with my circumstances, he one day offered to become a partner in my business, and to advance money in proportion to my stock. This confidential offer I soon accepted, early in 1778 he became partner, and we very soon laid out his money in second-hand books, which increased the stock at once to double.

I soon after this proposed printing a Sale Catalogue, to which, after making a few objections, Mr. Denis consented. This Catalogue of Twelve thousand volumes (such as they were) was published in 1779. My partner's name was not in the title-page, the address was only J. LACKINGTON & Co. No. 46, Chiswell-street. This our first publication produced very opposite effects on those who perused it; in some it excited much mirth, in others an equal proportion of anger. The major part of it was written by me, but
Mr.

Mr. Denis wrote many pages of it; and as his own private library consisted of scarce old mystical and alchymical books, printed above a century ago, many of them were in bad condition; this led him to insert *neat* in the Catalogue to many articles, which were only neat when compared with such as were in very bad condition; so that when we produced such books as were called *neat* in our Catalogue, we often got ourselves laughed at, and sometimes our *neat* articles were heartily damn'd. We had also a deal of trouble on another score: Mr. Denis inserted a number of articles without the author's names, and assured me that the books were well known, and to mention the authors was often useless. The fact was, Mr. Denis knew who wrote those articles; but was soon convinced that many others did not, as we were often obliged to produce them merely to let our customers see who were the authors: we however took twenty pounds the first week the books were on sale, which

which we thought a large sum. The increase stock augmented our customers in proportion, so that Mr. Denis finding that his money turn'd to a better account in Bookselling than in the Funds, he very soon lent the stock near two hundred pounds, which I still turned to a good account. We went on very friendly and prosperously for a little more than two years, when one night Mr. Denis hinted that he thought I was making purchases too fast, on which I grew warm, and reminded him of an article in our partnership agreement by which I was to be sole purchaser, and was at liberty to make what purchases I should judge proper. I also reminded him of the profits which my purchases produced, and he reminded me of his having more money in the trade than I had. We were indeed both very warm, and on my saying, that if he was displeased with any part of my conduct, he was at liberty to quit the partnership, he in great warmth replied that he would. The above
passed

passed at Mr. Denis's house in Hoxton-square, I then bade him good night; when Mr. Denis called at the shop the next day, he asked me if I continued in the same mind I was in the preceding night? I assured him that I did. He then demanded of me whether I insisted on his keeping his word to quit the partnership? I replied, I did not *insist* on it, as I had taken him a partner for three years, nearly one third part of which time was unexpired; but, I added, that, as I had always found him strictly a man of his word, I supposed he would prove himself so in the present instance, and not assert one thing at night and another in the morning. On which he observed that as he was not provided with a shop, he must take some time to look for one. I told him that he might take as long a time as he thought necessary. This was in March 1780. He appointed the twentieth of May, following. On that day we accordingly dissolved the partnership, and as he had more

P

money

money in the trade than myself, he took my notes for what I was deficient. We parted in great friendship, which continued to the day of his death ; he generally called every morning to see us, and learn our concerns, and we constantly informed him of all that had passed the preceding day ; as how much cash we had taken, what were the profits, what purchases we had made, what bills we had to pay, &c. and he sometimes lent me money to help to pay them.

At his death he left behind him in his private library the best collection of scarce valuable, mystical, and alchymical books that ever was collected by one person. In his lifetime he prized these kind of books above every thing ; in collecting them he never cared what price he paid for them. This led him to think, after he became a bookseller, that other book-collectors should pay their money as freely as he had done his, which was often a subject of debate between him and me, as

I was for selling every thing cheap, in order to keep and increase our customers.

Mr. Denis was, at the time of his death, about fifty years of age. He informed me that in his childhood and youth he was weakly to an extreme, so that no one who knew him ever thought he could live to be twenty; however he enjoy'd an uninterrupted state of health for nearly the last thirty years of his life; this he ascribed to his strictly adhering to the rules laid down by *Cornaro* and *Tryon* in their books on Health, Long Life, and Happiness. His unexpected death was in consequence of a fever caught by sitting in a cold damp room.

I am, dear friend,

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,
“ Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune,
“ Omitted, all the voyage of their life,
“ Is bound in shallows and in miseries ;
“ On such a foul sea are we now afloat,
“ And we must take the current when it serves,
“ Or lose our ventures.”

Shakespear's Julius Cæsar.

Dear Friend,

IT was sometime in the year seventeen hundred and eighty, that I resolved from that period to give no person whatever any credit. I was induced to make this resolution from various motives : I observed that where credit was given, most bills were not paid within six months, many not within a twelvemonth, and some not within two years. Indeed many tradesmen have accounts of seven years standing ;

standing ; and some bills are never paid. The losses sustained by the interest of money in long credits, and by those bills that were not paid at all ; the inconveniences attending not having the ready-money to lay out in trade to the best advantage ; together with the great loss of time in keeping accounts, and collecting debts, convinced me, that if I could but establish a ready-money business, *without any exceptions*, I should be enabled to sell every article very cheap. When I communicated my ideas on this subject to some of my acquaintances, I was much laughed at and ridiculed ; and it was thought, that I might as well attempt to rebuild the tower of Babel, as to establish a large business without giving credit. But notwithstanding this discouragement, and even *You*, my dear friend, expressing your doubts of the practicability of my scheme, I resolved to make the experiment ; and I began it by marking in every book the lowest price that I would take for it ; which being much

lower than the common market prices, I not only retained my former customers, but soon increased their numbers. But, my dear sir, you can scarce imagine what difficulties I encountered for several years together. I even sometimes thought of relinquishing this my favourite scheme altogether, as by it I was obliged to deny credit to my very acquaintance; I was also obliged to refuse it to the most respectable characters, as *no exception* was, or now is made, not even in favour of Nobility; my porters being strictly enjoined, by one general order, to bring back all books not previously paid for, excepting they receive the amount on delivery. Again many in the country found it difficult to remit small sums that are below Bankers' notes, and others to whom I was a stranger, did not like to send the money first, as not knowing how I should treat them, and suspecting by the price of the articles, there must certainly be some deception. Many unacquainted with my plan
of

of business, were much offended, until the advantages accruing to them from it were duly explained, when they very readily acceded to it. As to the anger of such, who though they were acquainted with it, were still determined to deal on credit only, I considered that as of little consequence, from an opinion that some of them would have been as much enraged when their bills were sent in, had credit been given them.

I had also difficulties of another nature to encounter; when first I began to sell very cheap, many came to my shop prepossessed against my goods, and of course often saw faults where none existed, so that the best editions were merely from prejudice deemed very bad editions, and the best bindings said to be inferior workmanship, for no other reason, but because I sold them so cheap; and I often received letters from the country, to know if such and such articles were *really* as I stated them in my catalogues, and *if they REALLY*

were the best editions, if REALLY in calf; and REALLY elegantly bound; and many other *reallys*. Oh my friend! I *really* was afraid for some years that I should be *really* mad with vexation. But these letters of *reallys* have for years happily ceased, and the public are now *really* and thoroughly convinced that I will not assert in my catalogues what is not *really* true. But imagine, if you can, what I must have felt, on hearing the very best of goods depreciated, on no other account whatever, but because they were not charged at a higher price.

It is also worth observing, that there were not wanting among the booksellers, some who were mean enough to assert that all my books were bound in sheep; and many other unmanly artifices were practised, all of which so far from injuring me, as basely intended, turned to my account; for when gentlemen were brought to my shop by their friends, to purchase some trifling article, or were led
into

into it by curiosity, they were often very much surprised to see many thousand volumes in elegant and superb bindings. The natural conclusion was, that if I had not held forth to the Public better terms than others, I should not have been so much envied. So that whether I am righteous or not, all these afflictions have worked together for my good. But I assure you, that my temporal salvation was not effected without "*conditions.*" As every envious transaction was to me an additional spur to exertion, I am therefore not a little indebted to Messrs. ENVY, DETRACTION, and Co. for my present prosperity; though I assure you, this is the only debt I am determined not to pay. I am,

dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

“ Constant at Shop and Change, his gains were sure :

“ His givings rare ; save half-pence to the poor.”

Dear Friend,

IN the first three years after I refused to give credit to any person, my business increased much, and as the whole of my profit (after paying all expences) was laid out in books, my stock was continually enlarged, so that my Catalogues in the year Seventeen hundred and eighty-four, were very much augmented in size. The first contained Twelve thousand, and the second thirty thousand volumes : this increase was not merely in numbers, but also in value, as a very great part of these volumes were *better*, that is, books of an higher price. But notwithstanding the great increase of my business, I still met with many difficulties on
account

account of my selling books cheap ; one of these I confess I did not foresee : as the more convinced the public were of my acting strictly conformable to the plan I had adopted, the more this objection gained ground, and even to the present day is not *entirely* done away. This difficulty was, In making private purchases of libraries and parcels of books, many of my customers for several years had no objection to *buying* of me because I sold cheap, but were not equally inclined to *sell* me such books as they had no use for, or libraries that were left them at the death of relations, &c. They reasoned (very plausibly, it must be confessed) thus : “ Lack-
 “ ington sells very cheap ; he therefore will
 “ not give much for what is offered him for
 “ sale. I will go to those who sell very dear ;
 “ as the more they sell their books for, the
 “ more they can afford to give for them.”

This mode of reasoning, however specious it seems at first, will on due reflection appear nugatory and erroneous, for the following reasons : I

I believe no one ever knew or heard of a covetous man that would sell his goods *cheap*: But every one has heard of such characters selling *very dear*; and when a covetous person makes a purchase, is it likely that he should offer a generous price? Does he not when buying possess the same avaritious temper as when selling? And on the other hand, I cannot help thinking (I am aware of the inference) that one who has been constantly selling cheap for a series of years must possess some degree of generosity; and that this disposition has prevailed in me when I have been called to purchase libraries or parcels of books, thousands in the three kingdoms can witness. And however paradoxical it may appear, I will add, that I can afford to give more for books now, than I could if I sold them much dearer. For, were I to sell them dear, I should be ten times longer in selling them; and the warehouse-room, insurance from fire, and the interest of the money

money lying long in a dead stock, would prevent my giving a large price when books were offered for sale.

But it did not appear in this point of view to the public in the more early stages of my business, until being often sent for after other booksellers had made offers for libraries, and finding that I would give more than they had offered, it was communicated from one to another until it became publickly known ; and the following method which I adopted some years since has put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt.

When I am called upon to purchase any library or parcel of books, either myself or my assistants carefully examine them, and if desired to fix a price, I mention at a word the utmost that I will give for them, which I always take care shall be as much as any bookseller can afford to give : but if the seller entertains any doubt respecting the price offered, and chooses to try other booksellers, he pays me
five

five per cent. for valuing the books ; and as he knows what I have valued them at, he tries among the trade, and when he finds that he cannot get any greater sum offered, on returning to me, he not only receives the price I at first offered, but also a return of the five per cent. which was paid me for the valuation.

But to such as fix a price on their own books I make no charge.

This equitable mode I have the pleasure to find has given the public the utmost satisfaction.

I am,

Dear Friend, Your's, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R X X X.

“ Behold, Sir Balaam, now a man of spirit,
“ Ascribes his gettings to his parts and merit.”

Pope.

Dear Friend,

W H E N I was first initiated into the various manœuvres practised by booksellers, I found it customary among them, (which practice still continues) that when any books had not gone off so rapidly as expected, or so fast as to pay for keeping them in store, they would put what remained of such articles into private sales, where only booksellers are admitted, and of them only such as were invited by having a catalogue sent them. At one of these sales I have frequently seen Seventy or eighty thousand volumes sold after dinner, including books of every description,
good,

bad and indifferent ; by this means they were distributed through the trade.

When first invited to these Trade-sales, I was very much surprised to learn, that it was common for such as purchased remainders, to destroy one half or three fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand ; for a short time I cautiously complied with this custom.

But I soon began to reflect that many of these books so destroyed, possessed much merit, and only wanted to be better known ; and that if others were not worth six shillings, they were worth three or two, and so in proportion for higher or lower priced books.

From that time I resolved not to destroy any books that were worth saving, but to sell them off at half, or a quarter of the publication prices. By selling them in this cheap manner, I have disposed of many hundred thousand volumes, many thousands of which
have

have been intrinsically worth their original prices. This part of my conduct, however, though evidently highly beneficial to the community, created me many enemies among the trade ; some of the meaner part of whom, instead of attending to the increase of their own business, aimed at reducing mine ; and by a variety of pitiful insinuations and dark inuendoes, straining every nerve to injure the reputation I had already acquired with the Public, determined, (as they *wisely* concluded) thus to effect my ruin ; which indeed they daily prognosticated, with a demon-like spirit, must inevitably very speedily follow. This conduct, however, was far from intimidating me, as the effect proved directly opposite to what they expected, and I found the respect and confidence of the Public continually increasing, which added very considerably to the number of my customers : It being an unquestionable fact, that before I adopted this plan, great numbers of persons

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were

were very desirous of possessing some particular books, for which however (from various motives) they were not inclined to pay the original price; as some availed themselves of the opportunity of borrowing from a friend, or from a circulating library, or having once read them, though they held the works in esteem, might deem them too dear to purchase, or they might have a copy by them, which from their own and family's frequent use, (or lending to friends) might not be in so good a condition as they could wish, though rather than purchase them again at the full price, they would keep those they had; or again, they might be desirous to purchase them to make presents of; or they might have a commission from a correspondent in the country, or abroad, and wish to gain a small profit on the articles for their trouble.

Thousands of others have been effectually prevented from purchasing, (though anxious so to do) whose circumstances in life would not

not permit them to pay the full price, and thus were totally excluded from the advantage of improving their understandings, and enjoying a rational entertainment. And you may be assured, that it affords me the most pleasing satisfaction, independent of the emoluments which have accrued to me from this plan, when I reflect what prodigious numbers in inferior or *reduced* situations of life, have been essentially benefited in consequence of being thus enabled to indulge their natural propensity for the acquisition of knowledge, on easy terms : nay I could almost be vain enough to assert, that I have thereby been highly instrumental in diffusing that general desire for READING, now so prevalent among the inferior orders of society ; which most certainly, if it does not prove equally instructive to all, keeps them from employing their time and money, if not to *bad*, at least to *less rational* purposes.

How happy should I have deemed myself in the earlier stage of my life, if I could have

met with the opportunity which every one capable of reading may now enjoy, of obtaining books at so easy a rate! Had that been the case, the Catalogue of my *juvenile Library*, with which I presented you in a former letter, would have made a more respectable appearance, and I might possibly have been enabled when I purchased Young's Night Thoughts for a *Christmas dinner*, to have at the same time bought a joint of meat, and thus enjoyed both a mental and corporeal feast, as well as pleased my wife, (which I need not inform you the ladies say every good husband ought to do.) But after all, quere, Whether if I had enjoyed such an advantage, should I ever have thought of commencing bookseller? If not, should I have been the *great man* I now feel myself, and I hope you acknowledge me to be? Though I am still, and ever shall be happy in declaring myself,

my dear friend,

most sincerely yours, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXI.

“ Those who would learning’s glorious kingdom find,
 “ The dear-bought treasure of the trading mind,
 “ From many dangers must themselves acquit,
 “ And more than Scylla and Charybdis meet.
 “ Oh ! what an ocean must be voyag’d o’er,
 “ To gain a prospect of the shining store !
 “ Resisting rocks oppose th’ enquiring soul,
 “ And adverse waves retard it as they roll.
 “ The little knowledge now which man obtains,
 “ From outward objects and from sense he gains ;
 “ He like a wretched slave must plod and sweat,
 “ By days must toil, by night that toil repeat,
 “ And yet, at last, what little fruit he gains,
 “ A beggar’s harvest glean’d with mighty pains !”

Pomfret.

Dear Friend,

ALTHOUGH the result of the plan which
 I adopted for reducing the price of books,
 as mentioned in my last, was a vast increase
 of purchasers, yet at the same time I found a
 prodigious accumulation of my expences ;

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which

which will not appear strange, when I inform you that I made proportionably large purchases, such as two hundred copies of one book, three hundred of another, five hundred of a third, a thousand of a fourth, two thousand of a fifth, nay sometimes I have purchased six thousand copies of one book, and at one time I had no less than TEN THOUSAND COPIES of Watts's Psalms, and the same number of his Hymns in my possession. In addition to these, I purchased very large numbers of many thousand different articles, at trade-sales of all sorts, as bankrupt sales, sales of such as had retired from business, others caused by deaths of booksellers, sales to reduce large stocks, annual sales, &c. &c. not to reckon those purchased of authors and town and country booksellers, by private contract, &c. to a very considerable amount. My expences were also exceedingly increased by the necessity I was under of keeping each article in a variety of different kinds of bindings, to suit the various tastes of
my

my customers: Besides paying my bills for the above, I was always obliged to find ready money to pay for libraries and parcels of second-hand books, which after a while poured in upon me from town and country. So that I often look back with astonishment at my courage (or temerity, if you please) in purchasing, and my wonderful success in taking money sufficient to pay the extensive demands that were perpetually made upon me, as there is not another instance of success so rapid and constant under such circumstances. Some indeed there have been, who for two or three years, purchased away very fast, but could not persevere, as they were unable to sell with equal rapidity: for no one that has not a quick sale can possibly succeed with large numbers. For supposing that a bookseller expends a thousand pounds in the purchase of four articles (I have often done that in one article) and these are bought at a quarter the usual price, the interest of the money is fifty pounds a year; besides which some allowance

lowance must be made for warehouse-room, insurance from fire, &c. so that granting he might sell a few of each article every year at four times the price he first gave for them, yet if he does not sell enough to pay the interest and other expences of those that remain, he is, after all, on the losing side; which has been the case with the major part of such as have purchased a large number of one book.

For several years together I thought I should be obliged to desist from purchasing a large number of any one article; for although by not giving any credit I was enabled to sell very cheap, yet the heavy stock of books in sheets often disheartened me, so that I more than once resolved to leave off purchasing all such articles where the number was very large. But, somehow or other, a torrent of business suddenly poured in upon me on all sides, so that I very soon forgot my resolution of not making large purchases, and now find my account in firmly adhering to that method; and
being

being universally known for making large purchases, most of the Trade in town and country, and also authors of every description are continually furnishing me with opportunities. In this branch of trade it is next to impossible for me ever to have any formidable rivals, as it requires an uncommon exertion, as well as very uncommon success, and that for many years together, to rise to any great degree of eminence in that particular line. This success must be attained too, without the aid of *novelty*, which I found to be of very great service to me : And should any person begin on my plan and succeed extremely well, he could never supersede me, as I am still enlarging my business every year, and the more it is extended the cheaper I can afford to sell ; so that though I may be pursued, I cannot be overtaken, except I should (as some others have done) be so infatuated and blinded by prosperity, as to think that the Public would continue their favors, even though the plan of business were reversed.

reversed. But as the first king of Bohemia kept his country shoes by him, to remind him from whence he was taken, I have put a motto on the doors of my carriage, constantly to remind me to what I am indebted for my prosperity, viz.

“SMALL PROFITS DO GREAT THINGS.”

or as it has been *kindly* written for me,

“*Small profits* DOES *great things*.”

And I assure you, Sir, that reflecting on the means by which the carriage was procured adds not a little to the pleasure of riding in it. I believe I may, without being deemed censorious, assert, that there are some who ride in their carriages, who cannot reflect on the means by which they were acquired with an equal degree of satisfaction to that experienced by,

Dear Friend, yours, &c.

LET

L E T T E R XXXII.

“ Books, of all earthly things my chief delight ;
“ My exercise by day, and dreams by night ;
“ Dispassion’d masters, friends without deceit,
“ Who flatter not ; companions ever sweet ;
“ With whom I’m always cheerful, from whom rise,
“ Improv’d and better, if not good and wise ;
“ Grave, faithful counsellors, who all excite,
“ Instruct, and strengthen to behave aright ;
“ Admonish us, when fortune makes her court,
“ And when she’s absent, solace and support.
“ Happy the man to whom ye are well known.
“ ’Tis his own fault if ever he’s alone.”

Anonymus.

Dear Friend,

IT has been asked, times innumerable, how I acquired a tolerable degree of knowledge, so as to enable me to form any ideas of the merits or demerits of books ; or how I became sufficiently acquainted with the prices that books were commonly sold for, so as to be able to buy
and

and sell ; particularly books in the learned and foreign languages. Many have thought that from the beginning I always kept shopmen to furnish me with instructions necessary to carry on my business ; but you and all my old friends and acquaintances well know that not to have been the case ; as for the first thirteen years after I became a bookseller, I never had one shopman that knew any thing of the worth of books, or how to write a single page of a catalogue properly, much less to compile the whole. I always wrote them myself, so long as my health would permit : Indeed I continued the practice for years after my health was much impaired by too constant an application to that and reading ; and when I was at last obliged to give up writing them, I for several catalogues stood by and dictated to others ; even to the present time I take some little part in their compilation ; and as I ever did, I still continue to fix the price to every book, except I am out of town. I have now many assistants

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in my shop, who can compile catalogues, buy, sell, and in short transact the major part of my business.

As to the little knowledge of literature I possess, I acquired that by dint of application. In the beginning I attached myself very closely to the study of divinity and moral philosophy; so that I became tolerably acquainted with all the points controverted between the Divines; after having read the great champions for Christianity, I next read the works of Lord Herbert, Tindal, Chubb, Morgan, Collins, Woolston, Annet, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Williams, Voltaire, and many other Free-thinkers. I have also read most of our English poets, and the best translations of the Greek, Latin, Italian and French poets; nor did I omit History, Voyages, Travels, Natural History, Biography, &c. At one time it was my intention to learn French, but as soon as I was enabled to make out and abridge title-pages, so as to insert them right
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in my catalogues, I left off for what appeared to me more pleasing as well as more necessary pursuits; considering that as I began so late in life, and had probably but a very short period to live, I had no time to bestow on the attainment of languages. I therefore contented myself with reading all the translations of the classics, and inserting the originals in my Catalogues as well as I could; and when sometimes I happened to put the *Genitive* or *Dative* case instead of the *Nominative* or *Accusative*, my customers kindly considered this as a venial fault, which they readily pardoned, and bought the books notwithstanding.

As I have indefatigably used my best endeavours to acquire knowledge, I never thought I had the smallest reason to be ashamed on account of any deficiency, especially as I never made pretensions to great erudition, or affected to possess what I knew I was deficient. Dr. Young's couplet, you will therefore think
equally

equally applicable to many others as well as myself :

“ Unlearned men of books assume the care,

“ As eunuchs are the guardians of the fair.

Love of Fame.

I had like to have forgot to inform you, that I have also read most of our best plays, and am so fond of the Theatre, that in the winter season I have often been at Drury-lane or Covent-garden four or five evenings in a week. Another great source of amusement as well as knowledge, I have met with in reading almost all the best novels; by the *best*, I mean those written by Cervantes, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Miss Burney, Voltaire, Sterne, Le Sage, Goldsmith, and others. And I have often thought, with Fielding, that some of those publications have given us a more genuine history of Man, in what are called Romances, than is sometimes to be found under the more respectable titles of History, Biography, &c.

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In order to obtain some ideas in Astronomy, Geography, Electricity, Pneumatics, &c. I attended a few lectures given by the late very eminent Mr. Ferguson, the present ingenious Mr. Walker, and others; and for some time several gentlemen spent two or three evenings in a week at my house, for the purpose of improvement in science. At these meetings we made the best use of our time with globes, telescopes, microscopes, electrical machines, air pumps, air guns, *a good bottle of wine*, and *other philosophical instruments*—

The mention of which revives in my memory the loss I sustained by the premature death of a worthy philosophical friend, whom you have met, when you occasionally did us the honor of making one of the evening party, and benefiting us by your instructions. I could say much in his praise, but shall forbear, as another friend, who was also one of this (I may truly say) *rational assembly* has composed what I think a just character of him,

him, free from that fulsome panegyric which too often degrades those it is meant to celebrate, and conveys to all who knew the parties, the idea of having been designed as a burlesque instead of an encomium; however, as you may not have seen it (though in print) and it will engross but a very little of your time to peruse, I shall here beg leave to insert it.

“ On Sunday, May 24, 1789, died at his
 “ house in Worship-street, Moorfields, aged
 “ 50. Mr. Ralph Tinley; one who had not
 “ dignity of birth or elevated rank in life to
 “ boast of, but who possessed what is far su-
 “ perior to either, a solid understanding,
 “ amiable manners, a due sense of religion,
 “ and an industrious disposition. Instead of
 “ riches, Providence blessed him with a good
 “ share of health, and a mind contented with
 “ an humble situation. Those hours which
 “ he could spare from a proper attention to
 “ the duties of a husband and a father, and

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“ manual

“ manual labour as a shoemaker, were incessantly employed in the improvement of his mind in various branches of science; in many of which he attained a proficiency, totally divested of that affectation of superiority which little minds assume. These qualities rendered him respected by all who knew him, as an intelligent man, and a most agreeable companion. Among other acquisitions, ENTOMOLOGY was his peculiar delight. Thus far the prospect is pleasing. It is a painful task to add, that this amiable person fell a victim to an unhappy error in taking a medicine. The evening previous to his decease he spent in a philosophical Society, of which he had many years been a member, and where his attendance had been constant; but finding himself indisposed, he in the morning early had recourse to a phial of antimonial wine, which had long been in his possession, and of which only a small part remained. This,

“ most

“ most unfortunately ! he swallowed ; and it
 “ having by long maceration, acquired an
 “ extraordinary degree of strength, and being
 “ rendered turbid by mixing with the metal-
 “ lic particles, it produced the effect of a
 “ violent poison, occasioning almost instan-
 “ taneous death. May his fate prove a warn-
 “ ing to others to be careful how they ven-
 “ ture to confide in their own judgement in
 “ so intricate a science as medicine !—His va-
 “ luable cabinet of insects, both foreign and
 “ domestic, supposed to be one of the com-
 “ pletest (of a private collection) in the king-
 “ dom, all scientifically arranged with pecu-
 “ liar neatness, and in the finest preservation,
 “ will (if it falls into proper hands,) remain
 “ a monument of his knowledge and ap-
 “ plication.” — But to proceed.

I cannot help regretting the disadvantages I
 labor under by having been deprived of the
 benefits of an early education, as it is a loss
 can scarcely be repaired, in any situation. How

much more difficult then was it for me to attain any degree of proficiency, when involved in the concerns of a large business ?

“ Without a genius learning soars in vain,
 “ And without learning, genius sinks again ;
 “ Their force united, crowns the sprightly reign.” }
 Elphinston's Horace.

The instructions that I received from men and books were often like the seeds sown among thorns, the cares of the world choked them. So that although I understand a little of many branches of literature, yet my knowledge is, after all, I freely confess, but superficial ; which indeed I need not have told you. However, superficial as it is, it not only affords me an endless source of pleasure, but it has been of very great use to me in business, as it enabled me to put a value on thousands of articles, before I knew what such books were commonly fold at : 'tis true I was sometimes mistaken, and have fold a very great number of different articles much lower than I ought, even on my own plan of selling very cheap,
 yet

yet that gave me no concern ; But if I found out that I had (as sometimes was the case) sold any articles too dear, it gave me much uneasiness ; for whether I had any other motives I will leave to such as are acquainted with me to determine, but I reasoned thus ; If I sold a book too dear, I perhaps lose that customer and his friends for ever, but if I sold articles considerably under their real value, the purchaser will come again and recommend my shop to his acquaintances, so that from the principles of self-interest I would sell cheap ; I always was inclined to reason in this manner, and nine years since a very trifling circumstance operated much upon my mind and fully convinced me my judgment was right on that head. Mrs. Lackington had bought a piece of linen to make me some shirts ; when the linen-draper's man brought it into my shop, three ladies were present, and on seeing the cloth opened, asked Mrs. L. what it cost per yard : on being told the price, they

all said it was very cheap, and each lady went and purchased the same quantity, to make shirts for their husbands, those pieces were again display'd to their acquaintances, so that the linen-draper got a deal of custom from that very circumstance; and I resolved to do likewise. However trifling this anecdote may appear, you will pardon me for introducing it, when you reflect that it was productive of very beneficial consequences, and that many great effects have arisen from as trivial causes.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R X X X I I I .

“ ——— Honest Englishmen, who never were abroad,
 “ Like England only, and its Taste applaud.
 “ Strife still subsists, which yields the better gout;
 “ Books or the world, the many or the few.
 “ True Taste to me is by this touch-stone known,
 “ That’s always best that’s nearest to my own.”

Man of Taste.

Dear Friend,

IT has been long since remarked, that a person may be well acquainted with books, or in other words, may be a very learned man, and yet remain almost totally ignorant of men and manners. Hence many fine chimerical systems of Law, Government, &c. have been spun out of the prolific brains of the learned, which have only served to amuse others as learned and as unacquainted with mankind as the

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the authors, and have frequently produced a number of Replies, Observations, severe, (not to say scurrilous) Criticisms, and new Systems and Hypotheses ; these again gave birth to fresh Remarks, &c. *ad*—— (*infinitum*, I was going to say—but I beg pardon, having promised to give you no more Latin.) These learned men, after tiring themselves and the Public, have too often left them just as wise on the subject as when they began. The reading and studying of History, Voyages, Travels, &c. will no doubt contribute much to that kind of knowledge, but will not alone be sufficient. In order to become a proficient in that useful branch of knowledge, “MAN, KNOW THYSELF!” was a precept of the ancient philosophers. But I can scarce think it possible for any man to be well acquainted with himself, without his possessing a tolerable degree of knowledge of the rest of mankind. In the former part of my life I saw a deal of what is called *low life*, and became

came acquainted with the customs, manners, dispositions, prejudices, &c. of the labouring part of the community, in various cities, towns and villages; for years past, I have spent some of my leisure hours among that class of people who are called opulent or genteel tradesmen; nor have I been totally excluded from higher circles; but among all the schools where the knowledge of mankind is to be acquired, I know of none equal to that of a *bookseller's shop*, especially if the master is of an inquisitive and communicative turn, and is in a considerable line of business: His shop will then be a place of resort for men, women, and children, of various nations, and of as various capacities, dispositions, &c.

To adduce a few instances by way of illustration: — Here you may find an old *Bawd* inquiring for “The Countess of Huntingdon's Hymn-book; an old worn-out *Rake*, for “Harris's List of Covent-garden Ladies;” simple *Simon*, for “the Art of writing Love-letters;

letters ;" and my lady's *maid*, for " Ovid's Art of love ;" a *doubting* Christian, for " The Crumbs of Comfort ;" and a practical *Anti-nomian*, for " Eton's Honeycomb of Free Justification ;" the pious *Church-woman*, for " the Week's Preparation ;" and the *Atheist*, for " Hammond's Letter to Dr. Priestley ;" the *Mathematician*, for " Sanderfon's Fluxions ;" and the *Beau*, for " The Toilet of Flora ;" the *Courtier*, for " Machiavel's Prince," or " Burke on the Revolution in France ;" and a *Republican*, for " Paine's Rights of Man ;" the poor *Politician*, wants " The History of Wat Tyler," or of " The Fisherman of Naples ;" and an old *Pensioner*, calls for " The History of the Wars of glorious Queen Anne ;" the *Critic* calls for " Bayle's Historical Dictionary — Blair's Lectures — Johnson's Lives of the Poets, and the last month's reviews ;" and my *Barber* wants " the Sessions Paper," or " the Trial of John the Painter : " the *Free-Thinker* asks for " Hume's Essays,

Essays ; and the young *Student*, for “ *Leland’s View of Deistical writers* ; the *Fortune-teller* wants “ *Salmon’s Soul of Astrology*,” or “ *Sanderfon’s Secrets of Palmistry* ;” and the *Sceptic* wants “ *Cornelius Agrippa’s Vanity of the Arts and Sciences* ;” an *old hardened Sinner*, wants “ *Bunyan’s Good News for the vilest of men* ;” and a *moral Christian* wants “ *The whole Duty of Man* ;” the *Roman Catholic* wants “ *The Lives of the Saints* ;” the *Protestant* wants “ *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* ;” one asks for “ *An Account of Animal Magnetism* ;” another for “ *The victorious Philosopher’s Stone discover’d* ;” one [wants “ *The Death of Abel* ;” another desires to have “ *The Spanish Rogue* ;” one wants an “ *Ecclesiastical History* ;” another, “ *The Tyburn Chronicle* ;” one wants “ *Johnson’s Lives of the Highwaymen* ;” another wants “ *Gibbons’s Lives of pious Women* ;” Miss *W——b* calls for “ *Homer in greek* ;” and a young *Divine* for “ *Juliet Grenville, a novel* ;”

novel ; whilst the venerable *Philosopher*,
 Drinks larger draughts of the *Pyrenean* spring,
 And likes a taste of every GOOD THING.

But it would be an endless task to set down the various and opposite articles that are constantly called for in my shop. To talk to these different pursuers after happiness, or amusement, has given me much pleasure, and afforded me some knowledge of mankind, and also of Books: and to hear the debates that frequently occur between the different purchasers is a fine amusement ; so that I have sometimes compared my shop to a stage. And I assure you that a variety of characters, strongly mark'd constantly make their appearance.

Would my health permit my constant attendance, I should prefer it, to every thing in life, and you may recollect that for some years I sought no other amusement whatever.

Having been long habituated to make remarks on whatever I saw or heard, is another reason why I have succeeded so well in my
 busi-

business. I have for the last seven years successively told my acquaintances before the year began, how much money I should take in the course of it, without once failing of taking the sum mentioned. I formed my judgment by observing what kind of stock in trade I had in hand, and by considering how that stock was adapted to the different tastes and pursuits of the times ; in doing this I was obliged to be pretty well informed of the state of politics in Europe, as I have always found that *Book-selling* is much affected by the political state of affairs. For as mankind are in search of amusement, they often take the first that offers ; so that if there is any thing in the news-papers of consequence, that draws many to the coffee-house, where they chat away the evenings, instead of visiting the shops of Bookfellers (*as they ought to do, no doubt*) or *reading* at home. The best time for Book-selling, is when there is no kind of news stirring ; then many of those who for months

would

would have done nothing but talk of war or peace, revolutions, and counter-revolutions, &c. &c. for want of other amusement will have recourse to Books ; so that I have often experienced that the report of a war, or the tryal of a great man, or indeed any subject that attracts the public attention, has been some hundreds of pounds out of my pocket in a few weeks.

Before I conclude this letter, I cannot help observing, that the sale of books in general has increased prodigiously within the last twenty years. According to the best estimation I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now than were sold twenty years since. The poorer sort of farmers, and even the poor country people in general, who before that period spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, &c. now shorten the nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances, &c. and on
entering

entering their houses, you may see Tom Jones, Roderick Random, and other entertaining books stuck up on their bacon racks, &c. and if *John* goes to town with a load of hay, he is charged to be sure not to forget to bring home “Peregrine Pickle’s adventures;” and when *Dolly* is sent to market to sell her eggs she is commissioned to purchase “The history of Pamela Andrews.” In short all ranks and degrees now READ. But the most rapid increase of the sale of books has been since the termination of the late war.

A number of book-clubs are also formed in every part of England, where each member subscribes a certain sum quarterly to purchase Books; in some of these clubs the Books after they have been read by all the subscribers, are sold among them to the highest bidders, and the money produced by such sale, is expended in fresh purchases, by which prudent and judicious mode, each member has it in his power to become possessed of the work of any par-
fresh

particular author he may judge deserving a superior degree of attention; and the members at large enjoy the advantage of a continual succession of different publications, instead of being restricted to a repeated perusal of the same authors; which must have been the case if so rational a plan had not been adopted.

The *Sunday-Schools* are spreading very fast in most parts of England, which will accelerate the diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes of the community, and in a very few years exceedingly increase the sale of Books.—Here permit me earnestly to call on every honest bookseller, (I trust my call will not be in vain,) as well as on every friend to the extension of knowledge, to unite (as *You*, I am confident will) in a hearty AMEN, with,

Dear Friend, ever yours, &c.

L E T-

 LETTER XXXIV.

" Happy the man that has each fortune try'd,
 " To whom she much has given, much deny'd,
 " With abstinence all delicacies he sees,
 " And can regale himself with toast and cheese."

Art of Cookery.

Dear Friend,

THE Public at large, booksellers in particular, have beheld my increasing stock with the utmost astonishment, they being entirely at a loss to conceive by what means I have been enabled to make good all my payments; and for several years, in the beginning of my business, some of the trade repeatedly asserted, that it was totally impossible that I could continue to pay for the large numbers of books that I continually purchased; and nine years since, being induced to take a jour-

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ney into my own country, with a view to the restoration of my health, which had been materially injured by intense application to catalogue-making, too much reading, &c. during the six weeks that I retired into the west, Mrs Lackington was perpetually interrogated respecting the time that I was expected to return. This was done in such a manner as evidently shewed that many thought I never intended to return at all. But how great was their surprize, when as a prelude to my return, I sent home several waggon loads of Books which I had purchased in the country.

As I never had any part of the *miser* in my composition, I always proportioned my expences according to my profits; that is, I have for many years expended two thirds of the profits of my trade; which proportion of expenditure I never exceeded. If you will please to refer to Dr. Johnson's "Idler" for "The progress of Ned Drugget," you will there see much of the progress of your humble servant depicted.

Like

Like Ned, I in the beginning opened and shut my own shop, welcomed a friend by a shake of the hand, at the same time beckoning across the way for *a pot of good porter*. A few years after, I sometimes invited my friends to dinner, and provided them a roasted *fillet of veal*; in a progressive course the *ham* was introduced, and a *pudding* was the next addition made to the feast. For some time a glass of *brandy and water* was a luxury; a glass of Mr. Beaufoy's *raisin wine* succeeded; and as soon as *two thirds* of my profits enabled me to afford good *red port*, it immediately appeared:

- “ Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
- “ And gives a pleasing flavour to discourse,
- “ By making all our spirits debonair,
- “ Throws off the fears, the sediment of care.”

My country *lodging* by regular gradation was transformed into a country *house*; and the inconveniences attending a *stage coach* were remedied by a *chariot*. For four years, *Upper Holloway* was to me an *elysium*; then

Surrey appeared unquestionably the most beautiful county in England, and *Merton* the most rural village in *Surrey*. So now *Merton* is selected as the seat of occasional philosophical retirement.

“ Here on a single plank thrown, safe ashore,
 “ I hear the tumult of the distant throng,
 “ As that of seas remote or dying storms.
 “ Here like a shepherd gazing from his hut,
 “ Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff,
 “ Eager ambition’s fiery chace I see ;
 “ I see the circling hunt of noisy men,
 “ Burst law’s inclosure, leap the mounds of right,
 “ Pursuing and pursued, each other’s prey.”

Young.

But I assure you, my dear friend, that in every step of my progress, envy and malevolence has pursued me close.

When by the advice of that eminent physician, Dr. Lettsom, I purchased a horse and saved my life by the exercise it afforded me, “ the old adage, “ *Set a beggar on horse-back and he’ll ride to the devil,*” was deemed fully verified

fied; but when Mrs Lackington mounted another, “they were very sorry to see people so young in business run on at so great a rate!” The occasional relaxation enjoyed in the country was censured as an abominable piece of pride; but when the *carriage* and *servants* in *livery* appeared, “they would not be the first to hurt a foolish tradesman’s character; but if (as was but too probable) the *docket* was not already struck, the gazette would soon settle that point.”

“Base envy withers at another’s joy,
 “And hates that excellence it cannot reach.”

Thomson.

But I have been lately informed that these *good natured* and *compassionate* people have for some time altered their story. It seems that at last they have discovered the secret springs from whence I drew my wealth; however they do not quite agree in their accounts, for although some can tell you the very *number* of my fortunate lottery ticket, others are as

positive that I found bank-notes in an old book, to the amount of many thousand pounds, and if they please, can even tell you the title of the very fortunate old book that contained this treasure. But you shall receive it from me, which you will deem authority to the full as unexceptionable, I found the whole of what I am possessed of, in—SMALL PROFITS, *bound* by INDUSTRY, and *clasped* by OECONOMY.

Read this, ye covetous wretches, in all trades, who when you get a good customer are for making the most of him! But if you have neither honour nor honesty, you should at least possess a little *common sense*. Reflect on the many customers that your over-charges have already driven from your shops! Do you think that you can find customers enough so deficient in penetration as not to discover your characters? no such thing. Your exorbitant charges are a general subject of conversation and dislike: you cannot with confidence look
your

your own customers in the face, as you are conscious of your meanness and imposition, and your sordid disposition is evidently the reason, that some gentlemen are led to look with contempt and disdain on tradesmen. But when men in trade are men of honour, they will in general be treated as such ; and were it otherwise,

“ One self-approving hour whole years outweighs,

“ Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas :

“ And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,

“ Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.”

Pope.

The profits of my business the present year (as near as can be computed before the expiration of it) will amount to **FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS.** What it will increase to I know not ; but if my health will permit me to carry it on a few years longer, there is very great probability, considering the rapid increase which each succeeding year has produced, that the profits will be double what they now are ; for I here pledge my reputation as a

tradesman, never to deviate from my old plan of giving as much for libraries as it is possible for a tradesman to give, and selling them and *new* publications also, for the same SMALL PROFITS that have been attended with such astonishing success for some years past. And I hope that my Assistants will also persevere in that attentive obliging mode of conduct which has so long distinguished No. 46, & 47, Chiswell-street, Moorfields; conscious that should I ever be weak enough to adopt an opposite line of conduct, or permit those who act under my direction so to do, I should no longer meet with the very extraordinary encouragement and support which I have hitherto experienced; neither should I have the smallest claim to a continuance of it under such circumstances.

I am,

dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXV.

“ By your Revenue measure your expence,

“ And to your funds and acres join your sense.”

Young's Love of Fame.

Dear Friend,

THE open manner of stating my profits will no doubt appear strange to many who are not acquainted with my singular conduct in that and other respects. But you, Sir, know that I have for fourteen years past kept a strict account of my profits. Every book in my possession, before it is offered to sale is marked with a private mark, what it cost me, and with a public mark of what it is to be sold for ; and every article, whether the price is six-pence or sixty pounds, is entered in a day-book as they are sold, with the price it cost and the money it sold for : and
each

each night the profits of the day are cast up by one of my shopmen, as every one of them understands my private marks. Every Saturday night the profits of the week are declared before all my shop-men, &c. the week's profits, and also the expences of the week are then entered one opposite the other, in a book kept for the purpose : the whole sum taken in the week is also set down, and the sum that has been paid for books bought. These accounts are kept publickly in my shop, and ever have been so, as I never saw any reason for concealing them. By keeping an account of my profits, and also of my expences, I have always known how to regulate the latter by the former ; and I have done that, without the trifling way of setting down a halfpenny-worth of matches, or a penny for a turnpike. I have one person in the shop whose constant employment it is to receive all the cash, and discharge all bills that are brought for payment, and if Mrs. Lackington wants money
for

for house-keeping, &c. or if I want money for *hobby-horses*, &c. we take five or ten guineas, pocket it, and set down the sum taken out of trade as expended; when that is gone we repeat our application, but never take the trouble of setting down the *items*.

It may not be improper here to take a little notice of some very late insinuations of my old envious *friends*. It has been suggested that I am grown *immensely rich*, and that having already more property than I can reasonably expect to live to expend, and no young family to provide for, I for these reasons ought to decline my business, and no longer engross trade to myself that ought to be divided into a number of channels, and thus support many families. In answer to which I will observe, that some of these objectors were in trade before me, and when I first embarked in the profession of a bookseller, despised me for my mean beginning; and when afterwards I adopted my plan of selling cheap, and for
ready-

ready money only, made themselves very merry at my expence, for expecting to succeed by so *ridiculous* a project, (as they in their consummate wisdom were pleased to term it) so that no doubt I ought to comply with any thing they desire, however unreasonable it may appear to me.

To deny that I have a competence, would be unpardonable ingratitude to the Public, to go no higher; but to insinuate that I am getting money for no good purpose, is false. The great apostle St. Paul, who was an humble follower of CHRIST, thought that he might be permitted to boast of himself a little; after which I suppose it will not be thought very presumptuous in me, if I should state a few facts, merely to justify my conduct in carrying on my trade beyond the time that certain persons would prescribe to me.

It is now about five years since I began to entertain serious thoughts of going out of business on account of the bad state of health
which

which both Mrs. Lackington and myself have laboured under ; but it was then suggested by several of my friends, that as I had many poor relations, a great number of whom are children, others are old and nearly helpless, and that all had justly formed some expectations from me : therefore to give up such a trade as I was in possession of, before I was absolutely obliged to do it, would be a kind of *injustice* to those whom by the ties of blood I was in some measure bound to relieve and protect. These and other considerations induced me to wave the thoughts of precipitating myself out of so extensive and lucrative a business ; and in the mean time I apply a part of the profits of it to maintain my good old Mother, who is alive at Wellington in Somersetshire, her native place. I have two aged men and one aged woman, whom I support : and I have also four children to maintain and educate, three of these children have lost their father, and also their mother, (who

was

was my sister) the other child has both his parents living, but they are poor; many others of my relations are in the same circumstances, and stand in need of my assistance. But——

“ Still the world prevails and its dread laughs,
 “ Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn.”

It has also been frequently said, that by selling my books very cheap, I have materially injured other booksellers both in town and country. But I still deny the charge: and here I will first observe, that I have as just a reason to complain of them for giving credit, as they can have for my selling cheap and giving *no* credit; as it is well known that there are many thousands of people every where to be found who will decline purchasing at a shop where credit is denied, when they can find many that will readily give it; and as I frequently lose customers who having always been used to have credit, will not take the trouble to pay for every article as sent home; these

these of course deal at those shops who follow the old mode of business; so that in such cases, I might say to the proprietors of these shops, ‘You ought not to give any person credit: because by so doing you are taking customers from me.’ As to my *hurting the trade* by selling *cheap*, they are, upon the whole mistaken; for although no doubt some instances will occur, in which they may observe that the preference is given to *my* shop, and the books purchased of me on account of their being cheap, they never consider how many books they dispose of on the very same account. As, however, this may appear rather paradoxical, I will explain my meaning farther:

I now sell more than one hundred thousand volumes annually; many who purchase part of these, do so solely on account of their cheapness; many thousands of these books would have been destroyed, as I have before remarked, but for my selling them on those very

mo-

moderate terms; now when thousands of these articles are sold, they become known by being handed about in various circles of acquaintances, many of whom wishing to be possessed of the same books without enquiring the price of their friends, step into the first bookseller's shop, and give their orders for articles which they never would have heard of, had not I, by selling them cheap, been the original cause of their being dispersed abroad; so that by means of the plan pursued in my shop, whole editions of books are sold off, and new editions printed of the works of authors, who but for that circumstance would have been scarce noticed at all.

I could relate much more on this subject, but will not unnecessarily take up your time, as I trust what is here advanced will convey full conviction to your mind, and as I believe it is universally allowed that no man ever promoted the sale of books in an equal degree, with,

Dear Friend, yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

“ — This is a Traveller, fir ; knows men and manners ;
 “ and has plough’d up sea so far, ’till both the poles
 “ have knock’d ; has seen the sun take coach, and can
 “ distinguish the colour of his horses, and their kinds,
 “ and had a Flanders mare leap’d there.”

Beaumont and Fletcher’s Scornful Lady.

Dear Friend,

AMONGST the variety of occurrences with
 which I have endeavoured to entertain you,
 perhaps not all equally interesting (and the most
 material of them, I am duly sensible, not en-
 titling me to the claim of being esteemed a
 writer possessed of the first abilities this age or
 nation has produced,) I recollect my not yet
 having given you an account of my TRAVELS.
 Possibly you might very readily pardon that
 omission, as from what has already appeared

T

it

it must be evident, the engagements which from time to time have fully engrossed my attention, have not furnished me with any opportunity of making the tour of Europe, or tracing the source of the river Nile, much less circumnavigating the globe. And even supposing I had been possessed both of the time and inclination for such extensive undertakings, the disadvantages which I labour under for want of having received a proper education, would have disqualified me from making such remarks and observations as naturally present themselves to those who have been fortunate enough to possess that advantage, and of course are qualified to present the world with a variety of subjects equally curious and instructive; 'though it is not without reluctance I think it necessary here to observe, that some of these gentlemen, not content with giving a true account of what actually occurred to them, and supposing that plain matter of fact would not be sufficiently interesting

resting

resting to excite that superior degree of attention and admiration which they were ambitious as authors to acquire, they have thought proper to intermix so much of the *marvellous* into their narrations, as has been the occasion of many persons reading them with such diffidence, as to doubt the truth of many relations, which though really strictly consistent with veracity, yet being novel and uncommon, they were unwilling to credit, lest they should incur the censure of being possessed of a superior degree of weakness and credulity. This I am also confident has induced many a modest author to omit passages, which though really true, he was cautious of publishing, from a fear of being subjected to the same severe animadversions, or what is still worse, being suspected of wilfully imposing on his readers. Recent instances of which, were it necessary, I could adduce; but I shall proceed with cautioning you from being alarmed lest I should fall into either of these errors; no-

thing *very marvellous* will occur in what I mean to present you with; though I shall not be intimidated from relating *real facts*, from the apprehension of not being credited. As an additional recommendation, (no doubt) the history of my travels will be interspersed with such remarks on *men* and *manners* as have presented themselves to me during my peregrinations; and this I previously warn you, will be done in my “accustomed desultory manner,” from which as Mr. *Pennant* says in his—“*Of London*,” (there is a concise title-page for you) I am too old to depart,” that is, as Dr. *Johnson* might possibly have explained it, “Sir, you are then too old to MEND.” But you, my dear friend, are not so fastidious a critic: although you may find the whole very *dull*, it shall not be very *long*; so that if it does not act as a cordial to enliven your spirits, it may (if read in the evening) prove a powerful *narcotic*, and afford you some pleasing dreams, when

Tir'd

“ Tir’d nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep,

“ His ready visit pays.”

I shall therefore not trouble you with a detail of bad roads, the impositions of innkeepers, what food I partook of, how many bottles of wine were drank, the height of steeples, &c. a sufficiency of this, I trust, has already appeared in different writers. Thus much by way of preparation for my journies. I now set out.

In *September*, Seventeen hundred and eighty-seven, I set off for Edinburgh ; and in all the principal towns through which I passed, was led from a motive of curiosity, as well as with a view towards obtaining some valuable purchases, to examine the Bookfellers shops for scarce and curious books ; but although I went by the way of York, Newcastle upon Tyne, &c. and returned through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, Lancaster, Preston, Manchester, and other considerable places, I was much surprized, as well as disappointed, at meeting with

very few of the works of the most esteemed authors ; and those few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books, bound in sheep, and that too in a very bad manner. It is true, at York and Leeds there were a few (and but very few) good books ; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found : in the latter city indeed, a few capital articles are kept, but in no other part of Scotland.

In Seventeen hundred and ninety, I repeated my journey, and was much mortified to be under a necessity of confirming my former observations. This remarkable deficiency in the article of books, is however not peculiar to the northern parts of England ; as I have repeatedly travelled into the western parts, and found abundant cause for dissatisfaction on the same account, so that I may venture without fear of contradiction to assert, that London, as in all other articles of commerce,

merce, is likewise the grand emporium of Great Britain for books, engrossing nearly the whole of what is valuable in that very extensive, beneficial, and I may add lucrative branch of trade. As to Ireland, I shall only observe, that if the booksellers in that part of the empire do not shine in the possession of valuable books, they must certainly be allowed to possess superior industry in reprinting the works of every english author of merit, as soon as published, and very liberally endeavouring to disseminate them, in a surreptitious manner through every part of our Island, though the attempt frequently proves abortive, to the great loss and injury of the projectors.

At Newcastle, I passed a day or two in the year 1787, where I was much delighted with viewing a singular phenomenon in natural history, namely the celebrated *crows-nest* affixed above the weather-cock, on the upper extremity of the steeple in the market-place. In the year 1783, as I was well informed, the crows

first built this curious nest, and succeeded in hatching and rearing their young. In the following year they attempted to rebuild it: but a contest ensuing among some of the fable fraternity, after a fierce engagement they were obliged to relinquish it, and the nest was demolished by the victorious party before it was finished. This bad success, however, did not deter the original builders and possessors from returning in the year 1785, when they took quiet possession of their freehold, rebuilt the premises, and reared another family. This they repeated the three following years with equal success, and when I was there in the year 1790, much of the nest remained, but the crows had forsaken it. The above occurrence, though to many it may appear incredible, is an undoubted fact. That *crows* should come into the center of a populous town to build their nests, is of itself remarkable; but much more so, that they should prefer a weathercock to any other situation, where the whole

whole family, and their habitation turned round with every puff of wind, though they were perfectly secured from falling, by the spike of iron which rose above the fane, around which the whole made their revolutions; and as on one side the nest was higher than on the other, that part being always to windward, by this ingenious contrivance of the feathered architects, the inside of the nest was constantly kept in a proper degree of warmth. I never recollect these various circumstances, without being lost in admiration at the extraordinary sagacity of these birds.

In this town however, I met with a greater curiosity, as well as a more amiable subject of it than a crow's nest, to excite my astonishment.

Mr. *Fisher* the bookseller introduced me to his daughter, a charming young lady, who being unfortunately born deaf, was consequently dumb, till a gentleman a few years since taught her to understand what was said to

to her by the motion of the lips. I had the pleasure of conversing with her several times, and found that she had much of the Scotch dialect, which as Mr. Fisher informed me, she acquired of the gentleman who taught her not only to understand the conversation of others, but to *speak*, he being a native of that country ; he remarked also, that she never had spoken the Newcastle dialect. This young lady, I was also informed, dances exceedingly well, keeping exact time with the music, whether it is played slow or quick. When it is considered what an intense application must have been used, both on the part of the teacher and his fair pupil, to produce such a happy effect, it surely reflects great credit on each of the parties.

In the year 1790, when I again visited Newcastle with Mrs. Lackington, she became the first object of inquiry, and we were both introduced to her.

Being on the subject of *Curiosities*, and hav-
ing

ing just related the pleasure I experienced on account of a lady acquiring the use of speech, permit me now to present you with another *rarity* indeed!—somewhat connected with the former, no doubt, but intended as an effectual remedy (temporary, at least) for an opposite complaint of the same organs, viz. too great a *volubility of speech*, with which, (as it is said) many females are so infected, as sometimes to lead them to exceed the bounds of due moderation and female decorum, and even display itself in the utterance of such harsh (though frequently inarticulate) terms, as tend too much to disgrace the unhappy patient, and violently affect the auditory nerves of all persons within a considerable distance.—To quit metaphor, and speak in plain English :

At the town-hall I was shewn a piece of antiquity called a *Brank*. It consists of a combination of iron fillets, and is fastened to the head by a lock fixed to the back part of it ; a thin plate of iron goes into the mouth, sufficiently

ficiently strong however, to confine the tongue, and thus prevent the wearer from making any use of that restless member. The use of this piece of machinery is to punish notorious *scolds*. I am pleased to find that it is now considered merely as a matter of curiosity, the ladies of that town happily having not the smallest occasion for the application of so harsh an instrument: whether it is that all ladies, apprehensive of being included in *that* description, have travelled Southward, to avoid the danger of so degrading an exhibition, or whatever other reason is assigned, I forgot to inquire. It however affords me pleasure to reflect, that the ladies of Newcastle are left at liberty to adopt a head-dress of their own choosing, confident that they possess a more refined taste than to fix upon one by no means calculated to display their lovely countenances to advantage, as I am persuaded the *Brank* would cast such a gloom on the fairest of them, as would tend much to diminish the influence of

of their charms, and give pain to every beholder. It may be prudent, notwithstanding, still to preserve it *in terrorem*, as who knows what future times may produce? But as I esteem it a very ingenious contrivance, and as there may be parts of the country still to be found, where the application of such a machine may be useful in some Christian families, (I will not say in *all*, having sufficient grounds for asserting the contrary) I here present you with an accurate sketch of it,



together with the manner of its application :
that

that if any ingenious artist should be applied to, he may not be at a loss how it is to be made. I would, however, advise such a one to be cautious in offering them to public sale, and by no means to advertize them, (especially if a married man, or having any views towards matrimony).

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-



L E T T E R XXXVII.

“ I’ll read you matter, deep and dangerous :

“ As full of peril and advent’rous spirit,

“ As to o’erwalk a current, roaring loud,

“ On the unstedfast footing of a spear.”

Shakespear’s Henry IV.

“ Ye powers, what awful changes often mark

“ The fortunes of the great !

Thomson’s Sophonisba.

Dear Friend,

IN my first journey to Scotland I sometimes travelled post, but often entered the different, stage-coaches, &c. for a stage or two, when I happened to see any setting out so as to suit my time and inclination : But at last I had pretty nearly paid dear for it, as the driver of the Diligence from Darlington to Durham happened to be much inebriated and before

fore his quitting Darlington had almost overset us. Not observing that the man was drunk, we attributed the fault to the horses, but we were very speedily undeceived in that respect by many convincing circumstances, so that we were one minute nearly in the ditch on the right hand, and the next but just escaped that on the left; at other times we experienced *striking proofs* of the inability of our conductor against the numbers of one-horse *coal-carts*, not to mention their frequently running foul of us for being on the wrong side of the road; (for drivers of coaches and carts can be to the full as savage towards each other there, as in London): however notwithstanding all these “hair-breadth escapes,” we retained our seats, till we arrived within three quarters of a mile of Durham, when at length the specific gravity of the driver’s head preponderating over all the other parts of his frame united, precipitated him with violence from the elevated station he till then possessed, (though

(though with difficulty) to his parent earth. There were three unfortunate passengers in the carriage, left to the discretion of the horses, viz. a gentleman, an innkeeper's wife, and your humble servant: the lady in strict compliance with the practice of her sex in similar situations, on seeing the rapid descent of our charioteer, immediately honoured us with a loud and shrill shriek; this, the *quadrupeds*, not accustomed to this pretty female note so much as the sonorous voice of a coachman, mistook for a signal to mend their pace, and they, habituated to pay all due obedience to the commands of their superiors of the biped creation, when understood by them, and finding no check; instantly proceeded to a full gallop; and we, however reluctantly, followed them down a gentle descent, not at a *gentle* rate, but with prodigious velocity. As I was quite calm and collected, I coolly reconnoitred the road before us, and observing that it was perfectly clear, as for half a mile not a

coal-cart was to be seen, although we had passed several scores, I began to reason with my companions, and they speedily became calm enough to assist in holding a council what was best to be done in our critical situation. Our debates were quickly ended, as we were unanimous in opinion that if we once entered the city of Durham, the carriage must inevitably be torn to pieces, owing to the variety of turnings and obstructions we should have to encounter, we therefore entered into an immediate resolution, *nem. con.* that to open the doors, and exhibit our agility by leaping out, was, of “two evils, choosing the least :” this we instantly did, in as careful a manner as possible ; we first alighted on our feet, and next complimented the ground with our noses, without receiving much injury. Our female companion indeed, by being rather too precipitate, alighted in a manner which on any other occasion would not have appeared strictly decent, of which she, poor lady !

lady ! was so sensible, that she immediately “ hoped *as how* we were both *married* gentlemen ;” which was quickly replied to by both in the affirmative ; and thus we saved our fair one the trouble of exerting herself in another scream, and ourselves the punishment of hearing it.

Being no longer parties concerned in the danger, it afforded us some entertainment to observe the progress of our vehicle now considerably lightened by our escape from it, and becoming every moment still lighter by the exclusion of small trunks, boxes, parcels, great coats, &c. they, in imitation of our example making leaps, some from the inside of the carriage, and others from the boot ; whether occasioned by the *repulsion* of the carriage and its appendages, or the *attraction* of the earth, I am not sufficiently versed in philosophy to decide. Posterity when they peruse my labours, no doubt will determine this *weighty* point, and transmit it to the remotest

period of time, properly dignified by *F. R. S.* in *Phil. Trans.*

The horses finding themselves less incumbered and urged on by the noise of the doors continually flapping, increased their speed: happily however the carriage was stopped before it entered the city, and no damage was sustained either by the horses or the carriage. Before we left the inn, our careful *son of the whip* arrived, not in the least injured, but rather benefited by his disaster, being suddenly transformed into a state of perfect sobriety; after him followed two countrymen laden with the several articles which had been so violently ejected. As I reflected that this unguarded man might not always be equally successful, either to himself or his passengers, as in the present instance, I obtained a promise from the innkeeper never to permit him to drive any carriage in future, in the management of which he had any concern.

It is astonishing what a number of fatal accidents

cidents continually happen from carelessness and the want of sobriety in this thoughtless race of beings. I was informed that only two days previous to my arrival at Durham, a coachman quitting his box to step into an adjacent house, in his absence the horses began to move gently, and a Lady in the carriage giving a loud scream, the noise occasioned the horses to set off full gallop, in consequence of which a lady of Durham, happening unfortunately at that instant to be crossing the way, was thrown down, and the wheels passing over her, she died on the spot.—One of the many melancholy effects resulting from the ridiculous practice of screaming. But I crave pardon of the ladies; when I begin passing censure on them, 'tis high time to close my epistle, (which if not very long will perhaps be deemed sufficiently impertinent) with,

Dear Friend, yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

“ O that the too censorious world would learn
 “ This wholesome rule, and with each other bear !
 “ But man, as if a foe to his own species,
 “ Takes pleasure to report his neighbour’s faults,
 “ Judging with rigour ev’ry small offence,
 “ And prides *himself* in scandal.”

Haywood’s D. of Brunswick.

“ Custom, the world’s great idol, we adore.
 “ And knowing this, we seek to know no more.”

Pomfret

Dear Friend,

IT is reported of a very eminent author,
 that he never blotted a line of what he had
 once written : on which it has been remark-
 ed, that it was a pity he had not blotted a
 thousand. Now though my extreme modesty
 will not permit me to put myself on a level
 with that great man as an author, whatever
 tive

the impartial world may think of our comparative merits, I must confess I do not like to blot what I have once written, fearful lest when I begin, (another proof of my modesty,) I should deface the major part of my manuscripts and thus deprive the public of the great advantages which may result from them. What I allude to, is an unfortunate slip of the pen in my last; however, as "confession of a fault makes some amends," and I immediately checked myself, craved pardon, abruptly closed my letter, and threw the offending pen from me with some degree of anger, I hope those lovely fair ones, who might think I meant to affront them, will with their accustomed benignity forgive, and indulge me with a smile on my future labours; and as a convincing proof how sensible I am of their kind condescension, I here engage never more to express my dislike of their *screaming*, except they should omit purchasing books of me, which I am sure every

candid fair (and what *fair* one is not candid?) will think sufficiently provoking.

But in order to remind them that every great man does not always conduct himself with equal politeness towards the Ladies, I beg permission to introduce a *very* great man to them : no less a personage than Doctor JOHNSON. Of whom indeed so much hath already been sung and said, that the subject may be supposed to be nearly exhausted; which is, however, so far from being the case, that notwithstanding two quarto volumes of his life by Mr. Boswell are just published, we are taught to expect another life by a different hand. Indeed until some other great man makes his exit (myself out of the question) we are likely to be entertained with fresh anecdotes of him ; but when that period once arrives, then farewell *Johnson* !

The Doctor, whose extreme fondness for that agreeable beverage *Tea*, is well known, was once in company with a number of ladies
assembled

assembled to partake with him of the same refreshment. The lady of the house happened to be one of those particularly attentive to punctilio, and had exhibited her finest set of china for the entertainment of her guests; the Doctor, who drank large quantities, and with considerable expedition, could not always wait with becoming patience ceremoniously to ask for and receive in due form the addition of a lump of sugar when necessary; he therefore without permission put his finger and thumb into the sugar-dish, tumbling the contents over, till he met with a piece of the proper size; the lady kept her eye fixed on him the whole time, and deeming his conduct a great breach of decorum, resolved to make him sensible of it, by immediately ordering the servant to change the sugar-dish. The Doctor, tho' apparently attentive only to his tea, noticed it, and as soon as he had emptied the cup, put it together with the faucer under the fire-place, with due care, however, not to break

break them. This was too severe a trial for the poor lady, who, apprehensive for the fate of her dear china, after a decent scream, with warmth demanded the reason of his treating her in so rude a manner. “Why, my dear
 “madam, (replied he) I was alarmed with
 “the idea that whatever I touched was there-
 “by contaminated, and impressed with anxi-
 “ous desire to contribute towards your felicity,
 “I removed the object so defiled from your
 “presence with all possible expedition.” This reply, though it extorted a smile from all the company present, did not satisfy the lady to whom it was addressed, who notwithstanding she exerted herself to appear in good humour, was too much offended to forget the affront.— This anecdote has been related to me with some *addenda* which heighten the story, though more to the disadvantage of the Doctor; but I believe as here related, it may be depended on as the real fact.

During my continuance in Scotland, which
 was

was about three weeks the first time, and about a month the last, I often reflected with pain on the illiberal, not to say brutal treatment the inhabitants received from the Doctor. At Edinburgh I heard various anecdotes related of him, which were perfectly novel to me, and in all probability will be so to you. I shall therefore give you a specimen :

Being one day at a gentleman's house in Edinburgh, several ladies and gentlemen came in to pay their respects to him ; and among others the then Lord Provost went up to the Doctor, bowing repeatedly, and expressing the highest respect for him, to all which the Doctor paid not the least attention. Exceedingly hurt at so flagrant a mark of disrespect, he turned round, putting a shilling into the hand of the gentleman of the house : On being asked what the shilling was intended for, he replied, " Have not I seen your *bear* ? "

The Doctor being drinking tea at another gentleman's house, the lady asked him if he
did

did not choose another cup : It seems she had forgot her having before asked him the same question; and on her repeating it he replied, “ Woman, have I not already told you that “ I had done ?” On which the lady answered him in his own gruff manner. During his continuance in her house she always talked to him without ceremony, and it was remarked that she had more influence with him than any other person in Scotland.

I was much pleased with the politeness of the gentleman who related me this story of the Doctor, as he appeared anxious to excuse him for his want of due decorum, and thus to palliate one of the most obvious blemishes in the character of one of the most eminent of my countrymen. I could wish the compilers of the biographical department of that truly great and useful work, the “ *Encyclopædia Britannica*” would observe the same politeness. And I hope that this hint will also induce them in some subsequent edition, when
I am

I am gone to

“That Bourne from whence no traveller returns,”

to do justice to my *great and astonishing merits*, by way of compensation for having fallen short in speaking of other *great men*; and should I happen to be *out of print* by the time the editors of the *Biographia Britannica* arrive at letter *L.* which seems extremely probable, according to the very deliberate progress of that work, I hope they will not slightly pass *me* over. If they should, let them take the consequence: as I here give them fair and timely notice, and they have not to plead as an excuse, the want of materials.

One word more concerning our great Lexicographer. It must be allowed by every candid and impartial person, that the extreme contempt and prejudice he entertained towards our friends of *North Britain* reflected a very strong shade on his character, which his warmest admirers cannot justify.

Were

Were I, as a South Briton, called upon to give my fair and unprejudiced opinion respecting national character of the natives of Scotland and those of England, and I flatter myself I have had ample opportunities of observing the peculiar traits of both countries, I would say, that if we in England excel them in some virtues, they no less shine in others, and if the North-Britons possess some peculiar frailties and prejudices, we of the South are not intirely free from others; so that were the virtues and vices of a certain number of each country placed in an hydrostatical balance (it must however be a pretty large one), I believe it very difficult to prognosticate which of the two would preponderate. It is true, I have met with one very great villain in Scotland, in Mr. S. which only tends to prove there are probably *scoundrels* to be found every where, and that without taking the trouble which Diogenes did, in search of an *honest man*; and I am much afraid, were I to enquire of some

North

North Britons, they could without any great difficulty point out to me some of my own countrymen as bad.

For my part I detest all national prejudices, as I think it betrays great weakness in the parties who are influenced by them. Each nation of the habitable globe, nay each province of those countries has certainly some peculiar traits belonging to it which distinguishes it from its neighbours. But if we are disposed to view one another with the severity of criticism, how easy, nay how frequent it is to discover superior virtues (as we think) as well as abilities in that particular spot which gave birth to ourselves, and equally divested of that strict impartiality which alone can enable us to judge properly, discover proportionable blemishes in the natives of other countries. In saying thus much, I do not mean to infer, that we ought not to be inspired with a laudable ambition to excel, not those of other countries only, but even those with whom we are more intimately connected

connected: but that should be done without drawing invidious comparisons of the merits or demerits of others. In short, let it be the earnest endeavour of each country, and every individual of that country in particular, united under our amiable monarch, to strive which shall have a superior claim to the title of being GOOD MEN, useful members of Society, Friends to the whole human race, and peaceable Subjects of a Government, which though not absolutely in a state of *perfection*—(and can that man be really deemed *wise* who expects to meet with perfection in any human establishment?) is still happily superior to every other in the known world, not forgetting our neighbours the French, our *natural enemies*, according to the long adopted language of national prejudice: but I hope that narrow minded disposition will henceforth cease; certainly nature never designed us as enemies, it has placed our stations near to each other, and surely there is not so great a dissimilarity in

in our national traits of character, as to occasion us to be in perpetual enmity ! The contrast now is less than ever. Like Britons, they have caught the spark of freedom, and nobly emancipated themselves from a state of abject and degrading slavery, to a distinguished and honourable rank among nations. Long as time shall last, may they, with us, enjoy the blessing so gloriously obtained, with that due moderation which always properly distinguishes between *liberty* and *licentiousness* ! The friends of *liberty* merit the full enjoyment of every advantage attending it ; those of *licentiousness* are unworthy the smallest share of it.

But whither am I *travelling* ? I am imperceptibly got into the road of politics. Coachman ! turn off immediately into another road.—Tis done, and happy am I to get out of so dangerous a track unhurt, which has broke the necks of numbers of clever fellows, and deprived many a bright genius of that superior part of HIM from whence all his bright effusions

sions for the good of his country were emitted. For *patriotism* (as you know) is always the motive which impels those worthies to such hazardous expeditions as have so frequently in the event proved fatal to them. For proofs we need not consult history ; instances are, alas ! fresh in our memories : witnesses London, 1780. and Birmingham, 1791 !

At all events, it is certainly too rugged a road for a bookseller to travel, it being already crowded with many much abler adventurers. And whilst Mr. Burke, of the “ Monarchy” (late of the “ Fox”) Inn, and Mr. Paine, at the sign of “ the RIGHTS of MAN” provide rich and ample entertainment for “ men and cattle,” let the public take their choice, or if they please (which indeed is the most rational mode), try them both, as some constitutions find one kind of food more easy of *digestion*, some the other ; and I remain fully satisfied with the subordinate character of continuing an humble distributor of the viands provided by
those

those and other very able caterers, and that upon easier terms than the admirers of such food will meet with elsewhere, according to the elegance or plainness of the *dishes* they are *served up* in. Some preferring *rich foreign china, elegantly gilt*; others, good substantial *English porcelain*; others, again being pleased with *Queen's ware*; and many more content with a *Welch dish*, or common *earthen ware*.

I am now suddenly conveyed again to Edinburgh. The old town, so called, has not much to boast of; but the new town is by far the most compleat and elegant I ever saw. In various towns of England and Scotland, I have indeed seen some good streets, and many good houses, but in this the whole is uniformly fine: not one house, much less a whole street that can be termed indifferent in the whole town.

And here let me do justice to North-British hospitality, and their very polite attention to such Englishmen who happen to travel to the

“land of cakes.” I can truly say, that the polite and friendly behaviour of the inhabitants towards Mrs Lackington and myself, claims our warmest gratitude and sincerest thanks. This the more civilized part of my countrymen will readily believe ; and as to those of another description (happily but a comparatively small number, I trust) are welcome to treat my assertion with that contempt usually attendant on prejudice, which is the result of ignorance.

The subject I now mean to enter into being a delicate one, permit me here to close my letter ; thus affording you a short respite, and myself a little time for consideration on the propriety of submitting my ideas (as you seem determined all those I send you shall be) to public notice.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

 L E T T E R XXXIX.

“ Set *Woman* in his eye, and in his walk,
 “ Among daughters of men the fairest found,
 “ Many are in each region passing fair
 “ As the noon sky, more like to goddesses,
 “ Than mortal creatures; graceful and discreet,
 “ Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues :
 “ Persuasive, virgin majesty, with mild
 “ And sweet allay’d, yet terrible to approach;
 “ Skill’d to retire, and in retiring, draw
 “ Hearts after them, tangl’d in amorous nets;
 “ Such objects have the power to soften and tame
 “ Severest temper, smooth the rugged’st brow,
 “ Enerve and with voluptuous hope dissolve;
 “ Draw out with credulous desire,
 “ At will, the manliest resolute’st breast.”

Milton’s *Samson’s Agonistes*.

Dear Friend,

IN my last I expressed some diffidence re-
 specting the propriety of committing to
 paper my thoughts on a particular subject,
 I have since weighed it with due caution,
 and the consideration of my having during

the long course of my epistolary correspondence always declared my sentiments freely on every subject, soon determined me not to degrade myself by shrinking back, now it is so near drawing to a conclusion.

The subject then is—that bright lovely part of the creation, WOMAN!—the source of all our joys, the assuagers of all our griefs; deprived of whose powerful and attractive charms, man would be a wretch indeed. But alas! the utmost efforts of my abilities are far inadequate to do justice to their merits: happily that pleasing theme has engaged the attention of the ablest and worthiest of men, from the remotest period down to the present time; and I trust ever will, nay must, so long as a spark of virtue remains to dwell in the human breast. And when I reflect, that

“They are not only FAIR, but JUST as fair.”

I have nought to fear.

I therefore proceed with cheerfulness to say,
that

that in Edinburgh, Glascow, Sterling, &c. there are more really fine women to be found than in any place I ever visited. — I do not mean to infer, we have not as many handsome women in England ; but the only idea I wish to convey is, we have not so many *in proportion* : that is, Go to any public place where a number of Ladies are assembled, in either of the above towns, and then go to any place in England where an equal number are met, and you will notice a greater number of fine women among the former, than among the latter. It must be obvious that in making this declaration, I allude to the genteeler part ; for among the lower classes of women, the majority are very homely, and the want of the advantages of apparel, (which those in a higher sphere can avail themselves of, and know how to apply) together with their fluttish and negligent appearance, does not tend in the least to heighten their charms.

Having both read and heard much related of
the

the manner of washing their linen, which I must confess I would not credit without having ocular demonstration; during my continuance at Glascow, curiosity led me to the mead by the river side. For the poor women here, instead of the water coming to them, as in London, are obliged to travel loaded with their linen to the water; where you may daily see great numbers washing, in *their* way; which if seen by some of our London prudes, would incline them to form very unjust and uncharitable ideas of the modesty of these Scottish Lassies. Many of them give a trifle to be accommodated with the use of a large wash-house near the water, where about a hundred may be furnished with every convenience for their purpose. But by far the greatest part make fires, and heat the water in the open air, and as they finish their linen, they spread it on the grafs to dry; which is the universal mode of drying throughout Scotland.

I had walked to and fro several times, and
began

began to conclude that the custom of getting into the tubs and treading on the linen, either never had been practised, or was come into disuse; but I had not waited more than half an hour, when many of them jumped into the tubs, without shoes or stockings, with their shifts and petticoats drawn up far above the knees, and stamped away with great composure in their countenances, and with all their strength, no Scotchman taking the least notice, or even looking towards them.

On conversing with some gentlemen of Glasgow on this curious subject, they assured me that these singular laundresses (as they appeared to me) were strictly modest women, who only did what others of unblemished reputation had been accustomed to for a long series of years; and added, that at any other time a purse of gold would not tempt them to draw the curtain so high. By way of contrast, let me observe that many of our London servant-maids, though not always so nice in other respects

respects, would not be seen thus habited *in public* on any terms, lest their precious characters should be called in question. A striking instance of the powerful influence of habit!

Most of the female servants in Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c. do all their work, and run about the town the fore part of the day without stays, shoes or stockings; and on Sundays I saw the country-women going to Ward's Kirk, in the same manner (stays excepted); however they do not go into kirk, till they have dressed their legs and feet; but they seat themselves on the grass, somewhere near, and put on their shoes and stockings, and garter up very deliberately. Most of these poor young country-women go without any caps or hats; they have in general fine heads of hair, many plat it, others let it hang loose down their backs; and I assure you, my friend, they look very agreeable.

I returned each time through Buxton, where
staying

staying a week or two, I visited Castleton, and spent several hours in exploring that stupendous cavern, called The Devil's A—in the Peake. I also surveyed Poole's Hole, near Buxton, and spent some days in that truly romantic village, where we purchased petrifications, &c.

I am, dear friend, yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER XL.

“ Good seen expected, evil unforeseen,
 “ Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene :
 “ Some rais’d aloft come tumbling down amain,
 “ Then fall so hard, they bound and rise again.
 Dryden’s Virgil.

“ New turns and changes every day
 “ Are of inconstant Chance the constant arts ;
 “ Soon she gives, soon takes away,
 “ She comes, embraces, nauseates you, and parts.
 “ But if she stays or if she goes,
 “ The wise man little joy or little sorrow knows.
 “ For over all there hangs a doubtful fate,
 “ And few there be who’re are always fortunate.
 “ One gains by what another is bereft :
 “ The frugal destinies have only left —
 “ A common bank of happiness below,
 “ Maintain’d, like nature, by an ebb and flow.”
 How’s Indian Emp.

Dear Friend,

I DID not intend to trouble you or the public with an account of any more of my *wonderful travels*, but being now at Lyme,
 for

for want of other amusements this rainy morning, I thought that a short account of this journey might afford you some entertainment.

My state of health being but indifferent, and Mrs. Lackington's still worse, I was induced to try what effect a journey would produce; and it being immaterial what part I travelled to; as I had not for so long a time seen my native place, and perhaps might not be furnished with another opportunity, we resolved to visit it. Accordingly in July last we set out from Merton, which I now make my chief residence, taking Bath, Bristol, &c. in our way to my native place Wellington.

In Bristol, Exbridge, Bridgewater, Taunton, Wellington, and other places, I amused myself in calling on some of my masters, with whom I had about twenty years before worked as a journeyman shoe-maker. I addressed each with, "*Pray Sir, have you got any occasion?*" which is the term made use of by
journey-

journeymen in that useful occupation, when seeking employment. Most of those honest men had quite forgot my person, as many of them had not seen me since I worked for them : so that it is not easy for you to conceive with what surprize and astonishment they gazed on me. For you must know that I had the vanity (I call it *humour*) to do this in my chariot, attended by my servants ; and on telling them who I was, all appeared to be very happy to see me. And I assure you, my friend, it afforded me much real pleasure to see my old acquaintances alive and well.

At Taunton and Wellington it seemed to be the unanimous determination of all the poorer sort, that I should by no means be deficient in *old acquaintance*. Some poor souls declared that they had known me for *fifty* years (that is, years before I was born) ; others had danced me in their arms a thousand times ; nay, better still, some knew my grandmother ; but, best of all, one old man claimed

claimed acquaintance with me, for having seen me many times on the top of a six-and-twenty round ladder, balanced on the chin of a merry andrew! The old man was however egregiously mistaken, as I never was so precariously exalted, my ambition, as you well know, taking a very different turn. But that was of no consequence: all the old fellow wanted was *a shilling*—and I gave it him. No matter (as Sterne says) from what motive. I never examine into these things. This I observed, that *small matters have made many happy*, and I was supremely so, to be the means of contributing to their comfort. And indeed who would hesitate at being the means of diffusing happiness on such easy terms, and with so little trouble?

The bells rang merrily all the day of my arrival. I was also honoured with the attention of many of the most respectable people in and near Wellington and other parts: Some of whom were pleased to inform me, that the
reason

reason of their paying a particular attention to me was their having heard, and now having themselves an opportunity of observing, that I did not so far forget myself, as many proud upstarts had done; that the notice I took of my poor relations and old acquaintance merited the respect and approbation of every real gentleman. They were also pleased to express a wish, that as soon as I could dispose of my business, I would come down and spend the remainder of my days among them.

William Jones, Esq. of Foxdowne, near Wellington, informed me of a remarkable *prognostication* in my favour; He told me that when I was a boy, about twelve years of age, Mr. Paul, then a very considerable wholesale linen-draper, in Friday-street, London, (I believe still living) passing by my father's house, one day stopped at the door, and asked various questions about some guinea pigs which I had in a box. My answers it seems pleased and surprized him, and turning towards

wards Mr. Jones, said, “*Depend upon it, sir, that boy will one day rise far above the situation that his present mean circumstances seem to promise.*” So who knows what a great man I may yet be?

Give me leave to introduce another prediction, though not altogether so pleasing as that just related. An Italian gentleman, by birth, was some years since looking at some books of *palmistry* in my shop, and at the same time was endeavouring to convince me of the reality of that science. In the midst of his discourse, he suddenly seized my right hand, and on looking some time with great attention on the various lines, he informed me that I had twice been in danger, once by water and once by a wound in my head; he was very right, but I believe by chance, as I have many other times been in very great danger. He added, that I had much of the goddess *Venus* in me, but much more of *Mars*; and he assured me that I should go to the wars, and arrive at

Y

great

great honour. He likewise assured me, that I should die by fire-arms pointed over a wall. —How far the former part of this gentleman's prediction may be relied on, I will not pretend to decide, but the last part of it was lately very near coming to such a decision as would have proved the fallibility of that part of his prognostication, though even in that case he might have pleaded his being pretty near the matter of fact, only substituting *gun-powder* instead of *fire-arms*, and I should not have had it in my power to contend the point with him. I will endeavour to render this intelligible: On Tuesday the fifth of July last, I very nearly escaped being blown up with the powder-mills belonging to Mr. Bridges, at Ewell, near Merton in Surrey. A quarter of an hour before that event took place, I was riding out within one mile of the mills, and having enquired of Mr. Ross at Coom-House, for the way that leads round by the mills, I actually rode part of the way, with an in-

tent

tent of visiting them. But some how or other, I scarce knew why, I turned my horse about, and a few minutes after I had done so, I saw the fatal catastrophe ; which happening by day resembled a large cloud of smoke, of a very light colour, and the report reached my ears soon after. I immediately concluded, it could be nothing less than the powder-mills blown up ; and on my return to my house at Merton I soon learnt that it was the identical powder-mills that in all probability I should have been in, or very near to, at the time of the explosion. By this accident it seems four men were killed, some of whom had large families. The bodies were so much mangled by the explosion that they could not be distinguished from each other, and the head of one of them was thrown to a great distance.

But to proceed with my journey. I esteem myself peculiarly happy, on one account in particular, that I undertook it ; and have only to regret it did not take place sooner, as it

tended to undeceive me in a matter in which I had long been in an error. The case was this: I had for seven years past supposed that the parents of my first wife were both dead; and on enquiring after them of Mr. Cash at Bridgwater, he confirmed the report. However, as we passed through South Petherton, being but a mile from the place where they formerly lived, I could not help stopping to find out the time when they died, and what other particulars I could learn relative to them, but to my very great surprize, I was informed that they were both living at Newton, two miles distant. On this information I gave the coachman orders to drive us there, but still could scarcely credit that they really were alive.— But, O my dear Friend, it is utterly impossible for me to describe the sensations of Mrs. Lackington and myself, on entering the cottage which “with ragged wall of mold’ring mud” contained them! There we found—two poor
“human

“human ruins, tottering o’er the grave!”—
The dim light on our entrance seemed a little
to flash in the socket, and every moment
threatened to disappear for ever.

While their “pale wither’d hands were
stretched out towards me, trembling at once
with eagerness and age.” I never before felt
the full force of Shakspear’s description,

“——Last scene of all

“That ends this strange eventful History,

“Is second childishness; and meer oblivion;

“Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste: sans every thing.”

from such a state of poverty and wretchedness,
Good God, deliver me!

The old man is ninety years of age, and the
good old woman eighty. The old man’s in-
tellects are much impaired; he for a moment
knew me, and then his recollection forsook
him. The old woman retained her senses and
knowledge during the whole of the time we
were with them. On inquiry I found, that

what little property they had possessed, had been all expended for some years.

“How many, once in Fortune’s lap high fed,

“Solicit the cold hand of Charity !

“To shock us more—solicit it in vain !”

Dr. Young.

Amidst this dreary scene, it was some alleviation to learn that their pious son had given them weekly as much as he could afford from his own little family, and I have added enough to render them as comfortable as their great age can possibly admit of. But for your sake and my own, I will drop this gloomy subject; which to me proved one of the most affecting scenes that ever I experienced during the whole course of my life.

During our continuance at Wellington, I one morning rode over to Black Down, on purpose to inspect an immense heap of stones on the top of the hill, strait before the town. The distance from Wellington is about two miles. Those stones cover about an acre of ground, and rise to a great height. The
country

country people informed me with great gravity, that “the Devil brought them there in one night in his *leathern apron*.” But the name of it, as well as the form, prove what it was. It is called Symmon’s *Borough*, or *Barrow*; which, you know, signifies a burial-place. I should not have taken any notice of it here, had I ever seen any Barrow of stones besides this, and five other smaller Barrows, about half a mile from the large one. The country people informed me that the *devil* brought the five heaps in his *glove*. I also observed the remains of a large camp near the spot. Camden has taken notice of a large camp at Roach Castle, three or four miles from hence; it is strange that he should not take any notice of so singular a Barrow as this certainly is.

I remain,

Dear Friend, yours, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XLI.

“ Ye who amid this feverish world would wear
 “ A body free of pain, of cares the mind,
 “ Fly the rank city : shun its turbid air :
 “ Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
 “ And volatile corruption from the dead.
 “ The dying, sickening, and the living world
 “ Exhal’d : To fully Heaven’s transparent dome
 “ With dim mortality. It is not air
 “ That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
 “ Sated with exhalations, rank and fell,
 “ The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
 “ Of nature : when from shape and texture she
 “ Relapsed into fighting Elements ;
 “ It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
 “ Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things,
 “ Much moisture hurts : here a fordid bath,
 “ With daily rancor fraught, relaxes more
 “ The solid than simple moisture can.”

Armstrong’s Art of Health.

LYME, Sep. 4. 1791.

Dear Friend,

BEING now at one of those places usually
 called *watering-places*, that is, a place
 where invalids resort in great numbers for the
 purpose

purpose of drinking the waters for which each particular situation is in repute, and bathing in them with a view to the restoration of their health, I shall trouble you with a few observations which have occurred to me on the subject. I cannot entertain a doubt but many by such a practice have been highly benefited; but at the same time I must observe, that such relief is only to be reasonably expected, where the parties possess a sufficient share of prudence to conform to such rules as are laid down to them by those who are best acquainted with the nature of their several complaints, the strength or weakness of their constitutions, and the different virtues those several waters possess, so as properly to adapt them to each particular case, and to drink the waters at proper stated periods, as well as in proper doses; besides conforming to such a regimen as shall co-operate with them in producing the desired effect. But where invalids neglect all, or indeed any of those rules, is it not rather an absurdity

abfurdity to expect relief?—I will endeavour to explain myfelf:

Thofe Waters either poffefs powerful virtues, or they do not. If they do, is it not obvious that fome judgment and caution is neceffary in the ufe of them? which muft either produce good or bad effects, according to the prudence with which they are applied. If on the other hand, they are of fo insignificant a nature, that they may be ufed at any time, and in any proportion without injury; and that too in diforders and conftitutions very much varying from each other, then furely the inference muft be, that no dependance is to be placed on them, and confequently it matters not if they are ever ufed at all. For what purpofe then do fuch numbers put themfelves to the inconvenience, expence, and trouble of travelling (frequently from diftant parts of the kingdom), and that too, when many of them are in fo debilitated a ftate, that their very removal is attended with extreme danger

danger, and sometimes proves fatal? But that those waters are not inactive, I am well convinced, having seen the bad effects arising from the imprudent use of them, in many instances, as well as the happy consequences attending their being used with due caution.

I was first led into these reflections by having been highly diverted, when I visited Buxton several summers, with the preposterous and absurd conduct of some of the company who resorted thither for the purpose of restoring their health. I remember six or seven gentlemen informing me, that they were violently afflicted with the gout and rheumatism, and had undertaken this journey in hopes of receiving benefit by the waters. These gentlemen often rode or walked about the cold dreary hills, in very damp wet mornings, and afterwards drank claret from three o'clock in the afternoon to three the next morning: But I did not continue there long enough to be a witness of the happy effects which must inevitably

tably be produced by a perseverance in such a judicious regimen.

I also visited Freestone, near Boston in Lincolnshire : to which place a number of tradesmen and farmers resorted with their wives, in hopes of receiving benefit from the use of the salt water, in a variety of complaints ; which they had been advised to do by the faculty, for a month, with particular directions to bathe every other day, and on the intermediate days to drink half a pint of the water in the course of that day. But these wise people on duly considering the matter, were fully convinced that this would detain them from their families and business longer than was altogether convenient ; and also (which they supposed their medical friends never thought of) that they could bathe the full number of times, and drink the prescribed quantity of the water, in a week or a fortnight at farthest, and thus not only expedite the cure, but likewise enable them to return to their families and
business

business so much earlier, as well as save the necessary expences attending their continuing for such a length of time at the watering place. These united considerations appeared to them so consistent with prudence and œconomy, that they resolved to put them into immediate practice. I remonstrated with several of these good people on the impropriety of their conduct; but whether they concluded I was a party interested in detaining them on the spot, or whether they deemed my judgement inferior to their own, I know not; but I observed that some of them bathed several times in a day, and drank salt water by the quart, the consequence of which was, that they left the place when the time expired which they had prescribed to themselves, much worse than they came. Some indeed were so very weak, that I am persuaded they could with difficulty reach their homes alive. And in these cases the want of success, instead of being attributed to the *folly* of the patients,

is

is generally transferred to the *waters*, and to the want of judgment in those who advised the use of them.

I assure you, my dear friend, this is pretty much the case at Lyme. My rooms commanding a view of the sea, I have this and several other days noticed many decent looking men going down the beach three or four times in as many hours, and drinking a pint of water each time. I have made the same observation at *Seaton*, *Charmouth* and other places, so that the observation of Crabshaw's nurse in "the adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves" have frequently occurred to me: "Blessed be G— (said she) my patient is in a fair way! his apozem has had a blessed effect! five and twenty stools since three o'clock in the morning!"

Relating these particulars to a medical friend, he informed me that such specimens of ignorance and obstinacy were by no means confined to the watering places; as he had in the course of his practice met with repeated instances

instances, where patients with a view of hastening the cure, and *getting out of the doctor's hands* (whom the vulgar *charitably* suppose wish to retain them there as long as possible) have swallowed a half pint mixture intended for several doses at once, and a whole box of pills in the same manner. The consequences of which have been, that they have remained *in his hands* a considerable time, some so long as life (thus foolishly trifled with) lasted.

But here are many of another class; some of whom, though not *all*, came on purpose to bathe, but during the whole of their continuance here, never found time to bathe once. These hasten to the billiard-room as soon as they are out of their beds in the morning, and there they continue until bed-time again. Some of these are indeed much benefited, being cured of *consumptions*, while others become proportionably much emaciated — *in their pockets*. And a great number, both of ladies and gentlemen devote the whole of
their

their time to dressing, eating, and playing at whist. Charming *exercise* it must be ! as they frequently sit still in their chairs, for eight or ten hours together.

Here are others again, who, like the gentlemen at Buxton, sit drinking until three or four in the morning ; making a delightful noise, to *compose* those in the same house who are real *invalids*, and who desirous of obtaining rest, retire early, though frequently to very little purpose.

I have also observed, that all the above places are as healthy for *horses*, as they are for their masters. For as the innkeepers depend almost entirely on the season, they take great care, and do all they can to make these places comfortable. So that if gentlemen who have fat, lazy, prancing horses, and want to reduce them in size and temper, he may be sure to have it done in some of the inns and stables at the various watering places : Where such *hay* is procured as must infallibly answer the
above

purpose even though they be allowed a double portion of Corn.

There is yet another very great advantage (which I had like to have forgot) resulting from attending the watering places. Such gentlemen who happen to have servants too honest, too industrious, too attentive, too cleanly, too humble, too sober, &c. by taking them to any of these places where they have so much leisure time, and where these party-coloured gentry meet together so often, and in such numbers, no one can go away unimproved, except he is a very dull fellow indeed. — This is not merely my own observation: for several gentlemen of my acquaintance assured me that they had always found their servants improved prodigiously after all these excursions.

We purpose setting out for Weymouth in a day or two: but as I intend that this shall be my last epistle, I will not conclude it until I arrive at Merton.

Z

Merton,

Merton, Sep. 11th. We arrived here safe last night, being my birth-day. At Weymouth we had the honour of walking several evenings on the Esplanade, with their majesties and the four princeesses. His majesty seems in perfect health and spirits, and diffuses life and spirits to all around him. Long, very long may he continue to enjoy the same degree of health and happiness ! But I could not help pitying Mr. Hughes, the manager of the Theatre there ; as the company in general seem to pay but very little attention to plays, while they can partake of the pleasure of walking and breathing the sea air with so many of the royal family. But his majesty, whose humanity is by no means the least of his many virtues, will no doubt consider Mr. Hughes, who is industrious to an extreme, as he is scarce a moment idle. For besides managing his company, performing himself six, sometimes eight characters in a week, he paints all his own scenes, and attends to many other subjects ;

jects ; and although he has had a large expensive family (nine children), the theatre there, and that also at Exeter is his own. Weymouth theatre he rebuilt about four years since ; every thing is very neat ; his scenes are fine, and his company a very good one. I saw them perform four pieces with a deal of pleasure.

In our road home, within half a mile of Dorchester, we stopt and spent half an hour in looking round the famous Roman Amphitheatre. It is close to the road, on the right hand side, and covers about an acre of ground. It is judged that ten thousand people might without interruption have beheld such exercises as were exhibited in this school of the ancients ; it is called Mambury, and is supposed to be the compleatest antiquity of the kind in England.

I also amused myself, as I travelled through Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, in surveying many of the numerous camps, fortifications, and barrows ; which lasting monuments of anti-

quity are to be seen in abundance in these counties, a great number of them remain in a perfect state.

Nor could I any longer omit the opportunity of seeing that stupendous piece of antiquity on Salisbury plain, the famous *Stonehenge*, two miles from Amesbury. We spent near two hours there in astonishment; and had not night came on, we should not have been able to have parted from it so soon. We found a very good inn at Amesbury, which proves very convenient to such as curiosity may detain on this wonderful spot until it is late. It is remarkable, that although so many able antiquaries have devoted their time and attention to the investigation of Stonehenge, it remains still a matter undecided when and for what purpose this amazing pile was formed; nor is there less cause of admiration, how stones of such magnitude were brought hither! I shall not presume, either to decide on this curious point, or offer any conjectures of my own. I

I have now, Sir, not only given you some of the most material circumstances of my life, but have also super-added a short sketch of some of my *travels*. And should the fine air of Merton preserve the stock of health and spirits which I have acquired in this last excursion, I intend to spend a few hours in the middle of three or four days in every week in Chiswell-street, during the remainder of the summer ; and during the winter I purpose spending most of my time there : where I hope again to enjoy the company of you, Sir, and some others of our old philosophical friends. In the mean time, I am,

dear friend, yours, &c.

P. S. I should deem myself deficient in point of justice to the ingenious artist who painted the portrait from whence the engraving affixed as a frontispiece to this volume is taken, if I did not embrace this opportunity of acknowledging the approbation it has been

honoured

honoured with by all who have seen it, as a striking likeness.

The following circumstance, though to many it may appear in a ludicrous point of view, yet as it is a fact which does not depend solely on my assertion, I shall not hesitate to mention it.

Before the portrait was finished, Mrs. L. called on the painter to view it. Being introduced into a room filled with portraits, her little dog, (the faithful *Argus*) being with her, immediately ran to that particular portrait, paying it the same attention as he is always accustomed to do to the original ; which made it necessary to remove him from it, lest he should damage it : though this was not accomplished without expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of poor *Argus*.

Those who have read history will not doubt the fact ; several similar instances being recorded of the sagacity and nice discrimination of

of these animals. Such as choose to be sceptics on this *most important subject*, are heartily welcome—I rest satisfied.

A P R A Y E R.

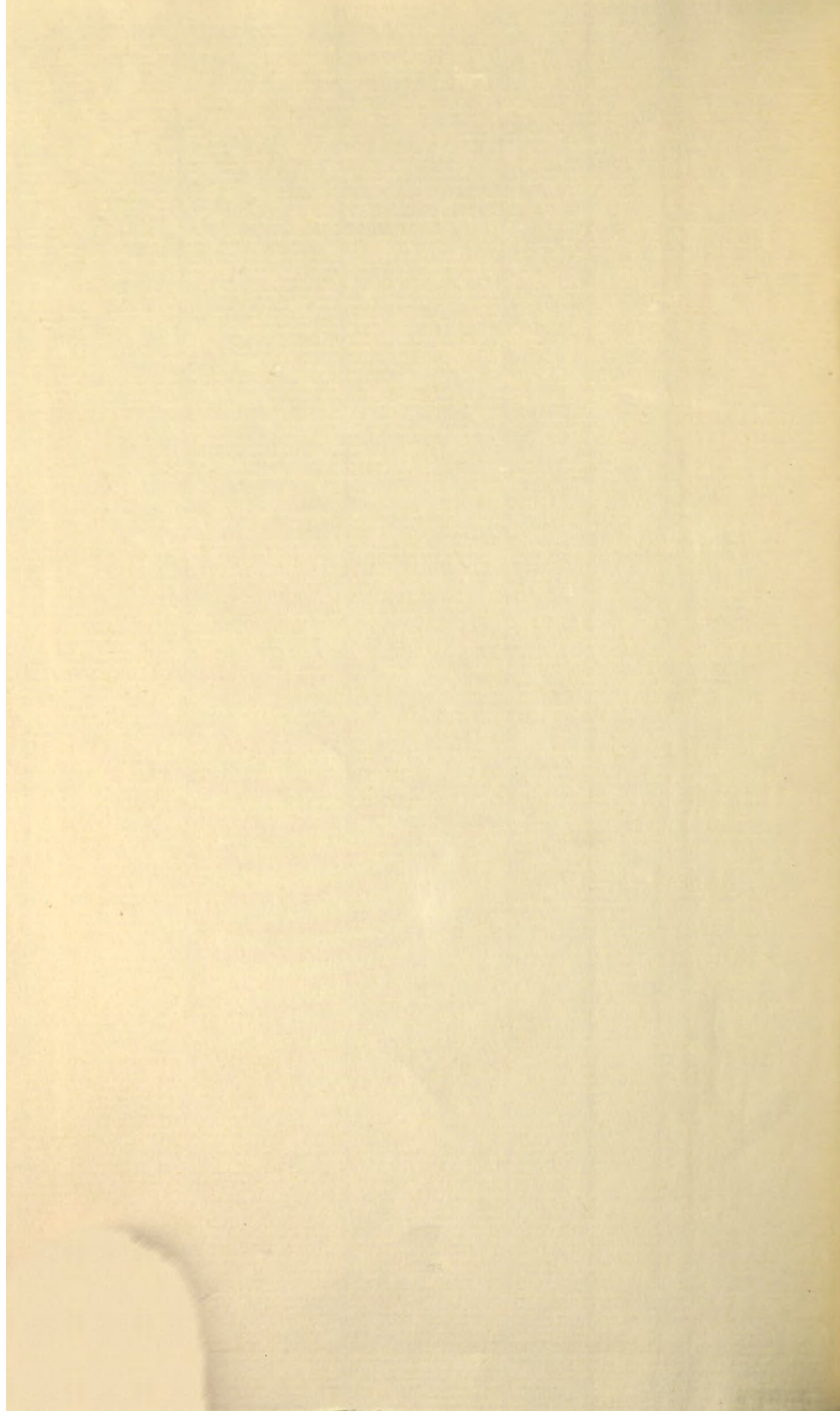
“ O may my work for ever live !
 “ (Dear friend, this selfish zeal forgive :)
 “ May no vile miscreant sawcy Cook
 “ Presume to tear my learned book,
 “ To finge his fowl for nicer guest,
 “ Or pin it on the turkey’s breast.
 “ Keep it from pastry bak’d, or buying,
 “ From broiling stake, and fritters frying;
 “ From lighting pipe or wrapping snuff.
 “ Or casing up a feather muff;
 “ From all the several ways the Grocer
 “ (Who to the learned world’s a foe, Sir,)
 “ Has found in twisting, folding, packing,
 “ His brain and ours at once a racking;
 “ And may it never curl the head
 “ Of either living block, or dead.

“ Thus

" Thus when all dangers they have past,
 " My leaves like leaves of brass shall last.
 " No blast shall from a critic's breath,
 " By vile infection cause their death,
 " 'Till they in flames at last expire,
 " And help to set the world on fire."

Amen.

FINIS.



Lackington, James,

Memoirs of the First Forty-Five Years of the Life of James Lackington, the
present Bookseller in Chiswell-street, Moorfields, London In a Series of
Letters to a Friend

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